

CAB 301 / 121

FROGMAN: The Bridges Enquiry into the
disappearance of Commander Crabb, 1956

I Origin of the Enquiry and Final Report

E.R.TOP SECRETSIR EDWARD BRIDGES

I attach a note which I have made, for record here and at No. 10, of the meeting which you attended in the Prime Minister's room yesterday.

For reasons which will appear from the note itself, I am not sending copies to the Foreign Office or to the Admiralty.

I assume that you will proceed with the action noted in the final paragraph without any further instructions from the Prime Minister.

Norman Brook.

27TH JUNE, 1956

E.R.

TOP SECRET

NOTE FOR RECORD

I attended a meeting at No. 10 this morning about my report on the Crabb affair. There were present the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Foreign Secretary, the First Lord of the Admiralty, myself and Sir Norman Brook.

The object of the meeting was to settle what action should be taken on my report, copies of which had been circulated to those present at the meeting.

I had also seen, off the record before the meeting, copies of minutes sent to the Prime Minister by the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord.

The Foreign Secretary's minute covered one from "C" which proposed (i) that F.A.O. should be moved, and (ii) that two people in M.I.6 should be severely censured and three or four others censured.

["C" had carried out an enquiry of his own into the degree of responsibility for the failure of the operation ~~on behalf~~ of those in the middle ranks between himself and "D". And some of those censured fell in this group.)

The two minutes from the First Lord of the Admiralty dealt with the actions of the D.N.I. and the Permanent Secretary and purported to say that he had delivered rather downright rebukes to both, contrary to the arrangement that nothing should be said or done until the current meeting under the Prime Minister's chairmanship.

X The first point dealt with was the recommendations I made that there should be further enquiries ^{lexa} into questions of organisation. It was agreed that I should be asked to do this. The only comment made was one by the Foreign Secretary in which he asked that I should at an early stage seek the views of the J.I.C. on all this. To this, of course, I assented as it is clearly something quite essential and, indeed, obvious.

/The

E.R.

The next point dealt with was action in regard to staff of M.I.6.

And here the recommendations for action proposed were approved.

There was some discussion about D.N.I.'s actions. The First Lord, in his minute, had implied that he thought that the worst thing D.N.I. did was to fail to supervise the way in which M.I.6 carried out the operation. The Prime Minister said he did not agree and he thought that the most blameworthy action was that D.N.I. ought to have told M.I.6 of ^{his} the P.M.'s ruling against Operation CLARET.

Then as to the action to be taken as regards D.N.I. The First Lord, under cross-examination, said that although he had blown up D.N.I. when he had first heard about the business he had done nothing since getting the Prime Minister's minute and my report. It was generally agreed that he should not do more than say that when matters of this sort arose D.N.I. really must remember how important it was to report happenings to higher authority, thereby implying that he had acted wrongly on the present occasion but falling short of a formal rebuke.

Finally, the position of Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick and Sir John Lang was discussed. Here again it was felt that both ought to have reported the matter to their Ministers much sooner. This was ^{how} not an occasion for a formal rebuke: it would be sufficient to say that Ministers accepted the view on this set out in Section V of my report and felt sure that the two officers concerned would themselves take the same view of the matter.

It was agreed that the two Ministers should act on the following day.

ECB

26th June, 1956

DJM Presumably I shall
get something in writing
from AD to be X.
ECB

File

TOP SECRETMR. BISHOP

I attach, for purposes of record, a note of the discussion held yesterday about the action to be taken on the report of Sir Edward Bridges' enquiry into the frogman incident at Portsmouth.

In view particularly of what is said in the fifth paragraph of this note, I am not sending copies of it to the Foreign Office or the Admiralty.

I am, however, sending a copy to Bridges, saying that I assume that he will proceed with the action noted in the final paragraph without any further instructions from the Prime Minister.

(Signed) NORMAN BROOK

27TH JUNE. 1956

TOP SECRETCOMMANDER CRABB

The Prime Minister held a meeting this morning to consider what action should be taken on the report of the enquiry held by Sir Edward Bridges. The Foreign Secretary, the Minister of Defence and the First Lord of the Admiralty were present. Sir Edward Bridges and Sir Norman Brook were in attendance.

The Foreign Secretary's proposals for disciplinary action within the Foreign Office and M.I.6. were approved.

As regards the Admiralty, the First Lord said that he had not delivered any formal reprimands on the basis of Sir Edward Bridges' report. His admonitions to the D.N.I., mentioned in his minutes to the Prime Minister, had been given at an earlier stage.

The Prime Minister said that he did not wholly share the First Lord's view of the blame attaching to D.N.I. He thought he was more to blame for failing to take action on learning of the Prime Minister's ruling that "nothing of this kind should be done on this occasion": when he knew that this ruling was given, he ought either to have communicated it to M.I.6., so that they would be warned to seek clearance for what they were doing, or to have reported what they were doing to his superiors in the Admiralty. It was for this failure that he should be rebuked. In the Prime Minister's view, it was hardly reasonable to blame him for not satisfying himself that M.I.6. would carry out the operation effectively: that seemed to be more a matter for M.I.6. than for D.N.I. The other Ministers present endorsed the Prime Minister's view. The First Lord accepted it and said that he would speak to the D.N.I. accordingly.

As regards the two Permanent Secretaries, it was agreed that they had been guilty of an error of judgment - and, in particular, that they should have consulted together when they knew that the operation had miscarried. Anything in the nature of a formal reprimand would, however, be inappropriate. It would suffice if they were told, by their

respective Ministers, that the Prime Minister was in agreement with what was said on this aspect of the matter in the report of Sir Edward Bridges' enquiry.

It was agreed that the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord, respectively, should now proceed to take the disciplinary steps which they proposed - subject, in the case of the Admiralty, to the adjustment noted above. They would consult together to ensure that action in the two Departments was taken simultaneously - preferably in the course of Wednesday, 27th June.

It was further agreed that Sir Edward Bridges, after such further consultations as were required, should submit to the Prime Minister proposals for changes in procedure and practice designed to reduce the risk that such an incident would occur again. In this connection it was especially important to define more clearly where Ministerial responsibility lay for operations undertaken by M.I.6. on behalf of the Service Departments.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

26th June, 1956.

TOP SECRETCRAHB

1. The Foreign Secretary's recommendations for disciplinary action within the Foreign Office and M.I.6. seem to be about right.

2. As regards D.N.I., the First Lord is disposed to acquit him of blame for failing to tell M.I.6. about your ruling that "nothing of this sort can be done on this occasion" - but to blame him for not satisfying himself that the operation would be carried out effectively. I would myself take the opposite view on both points. He knew what M.I.6. were planning to do and, when he heard of your ruling, I think he should have told them about it. On the other hand I do not see why he should be saddled with responsibility for assuring himself that M.I.6. would not make a hash of the operation. That, surely, was their business not his.

3. There remains the question of the two Permanent Secretaries. Some blame, I think, attaches to each. The arrangement by which one would not tell his Minister without warning the other was obviously open to the risk that neither would think it his business to consider whether Ministers should be told. This is what in fact happened. And one of the lessons which emerges from the enquiry is that better machinery must now be devised for determining where the responsibility for such operations lies.

I do not think that either Permanent Secretary is more to blame than the other. I think it would be reasonable that each should be told, by his Minister, that they should not have been content with an arrangement which had this unsatisfactory result - and reminded that, if they had got in touch with one another (and this applies particularly perhaps to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick) Ministers would have been informed earlier. No more than this seems to me to be needed: I would have thought that the First Lord would be going too far in saying that Sir John Lang's "error of judgment was disappointing and indeed deplorable".

4. Other points to be decided to-morrow are:-

(a) When disciplinary action should be taken by the two Ministers.
Presumably they should proceed simultaneously.

(b) Whether Sir Edward Bridges should now be asked to formulate specific proposals for new procedures and practices designed to reduce the risk that this sort of thing will happen again. Under this head the main need is to define where Departmental responsibilities^x lies for operations undertaken by M.I.6. on behalf of Service Departments.

(Signed) NORMAN BROOK

25TH JUNE, 1956

10 Copies.

SECRET

Prime Minister	1
Sir Frank Newsam	1
Sir John Lang	1
Sir I. Kirkpatrick	1
File	1

Five copies destroyed.

NOTE FOR RECORD

The questions raised in the attached note were discussed at a meeting held in the Prime Minister's Room, House of Commons, at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday, 31st May. Present at this meeting were - the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Home Secretary, the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that, of the alternatives discussed in the attached note, it seemed to him that the preferable course would be for the Admiralty to notify the Registrar-General that Commander Crabb's death could be presumed. He would, however, be glad to have the views of his colleagues on this question.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY said, with reference to paragraph 9 of the attached note, that he did not wish to press the suggestion that the Admiralty should not be associated further with this matter. Now that he had read the report of Sir Edward Bridges' enquiry he realised that officers serving in the Admiralty had in fact been implicated in the early stages of this affair to a far greater extent than he had understood previously to be the case. If, therefore, other Ministers felt that the better course was for the Admiralty to issue a certificate presuming death, he would be content that the Admiralty should hold themselves responsible for dealing with any consequential action. This course would at least have the merit of being consistent with earlier official statements. And the irregularity which it involved was not perhaps very great. Though Commander Crabb was not a serving officer at the time when he met his death, he was at least still liable to recall to the Reserve.

THE HOME SECRETARY said that there could be no doubt that the first of the alternative courses was the lesser evil. The difficulties in which it might involve the Government were at least predictable. On the other hand, if the course were adopted of allowing an inquest to be held, there was no knowing what embarrassments it might involve. It would certainly give rise to much further publicity. And, even if the coroner were willing to accept Home Office advice on such matters as the evidence which should be called, the Press would not fail to draw attention to the absence of any witnesses who might be withheld. In particular, it would be highly embarrassing if Mr. Smith were allowed to give evidence at an inquest; but, on the other hand, if he were not called, embarrassing deductions would be made from that fact.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY said that he fully agreed with all that had been said about the dangers of adopting a course which might involve the holding of an inquest. He much preferred the first alternative. If it were known that the Registrar-General would accept the Admiralty's certificate presuming death, it seemed unlikely that this course could give rise to any great difficulty.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that, in the light of the views expressed in the discussion, it seemed clear that the better course would be for the Admiralty to issue, in normal course, a certificate that Commander Crabb was presumed by them for official purposes to have died on 19th April. The solicitors acting for Commander Crabb's mother had already asked the Admiralty for such a certificate. The Admiralty would make a corresponding notification to the Registrar-General. It would be convenient if the Admiralty would also hold themselves responsible for taking such consequential action as might become necessary.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

5th June, 1956.

TOP SECRET**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MINUTE**FOREIGN SECRETARYSERIAL No. M.114/56

As I informed you in my minute of May 9, I asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth Harbour on April 19. Sir Edward Bridges has now completed this enquiry and I am sending you a copy of his report with this minute.

Sir Edward Bridges makes recommendations about the responsibility of the individuals concerned for the incident, and suggests the need for changes in procedure and organisation. I should be grateful if you would consider urgently, in the light of Sir Edward Bridges' report, what disciplinary action

- 2 -

you think it may be necessary to take against persons serving in the Foreign Office.

When you have considered this, I think that the best course would be for us to discuss with the First Lord of the Admiralty before you take action, what steps, disciplinary and other, should follow. I have it in mind that one of these steps should be to ask Sir Edward Bridges to make recommendations to ensure proper Ministerial control. As this will affect the other Service Departments, I propose to ask the Minister of Defence to join in our discussion, which I should like to have early next week.

I am sending a similar minute to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

A.E

May 30, 1956.

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MINUTE

TOP SECRET

SERIAL No. M.113/56

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

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- 2 -

serving in the Admiralty.

When you have considered this, I think that the best course would be for us to discuss with the Foreign Secretary before you take action, what steps, disciplinary and other, should follow. I have it in mind that one of these steps should be to ask Sir Edward Bridges to make recommendations to ensure proper Ministerial control. As this will affect the other Service Departments, I propose to ask the Minister of Defence to join in our discussion, which I should like to have early next week.

I am sending a similar minute to the Foreign Secretary.

A.E.

May 30, 1956.

File.

SECRET

FOREIGN SECRETARY

I attach a note of a further problem which has now to be resolved in connection with the frogman incident.

The Prime Minister wishes to discuss this with you, the Home Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty. His Private Secretary will let you know the time proposed for this meeting.

NORMAN BROOK

29TH MAY, 1956

Similar minutes to -

Home Secretary
First Lord of the Admiralty

Copy to: Mr. de Zulueta, 10, Downing Street.

SECRET

COMMANDER CRABB

10 copies.

Prime Minister	1
Home Secretary	1
Foreign Secretary	1
First Lord	1
Sir F. Newsam	1
Sir J. Lang	1
Sir I. Kirkpatrick	1
File	1

2 copies destroyed

Two problems remain to be dealt with:-

- (a) the establishment of or presumption of death;
- (b) payment for the action involving Crabb's death.

2. The first is the most important. The matter cannot be left where it is because royalties from a biography about to be published will accrue to his estate, and his many creditors will want to receive their share. There are two possible courses open. The first is that the Admiralty should formally notify the Registrar General of their presumption of Crabb's death. The second is that the Government should do nothing, leaving the initiative in the hands of the Solicitors handling Crabb's affairs on behalf of his next-of-kin (Mother).

3. The first course involves making use of the procedure which has existed for some time between the Admiralty and the Registrar General of Births and Deaths. When a naval officer or man disappears in circumstances which leave no doubt in the mind of the naval authorities that he is dead, though the body cannot be found, the Admiralty send a form to the Registrar General indicating that they are presuming death for official purposes. The Admiralty are also prepared to furnish a person prima facie entitled to it, on request, a certificate that X "is presumed by the Admiralty for official purposes to have died on". This is a well understood arrangement (on practical grounds a good arrangement though there is no legal backing for it). The Solicitors acting for Mrs. Crabb (Mother) have asked the Admiralty for a certificate of this kind.

4. Strictly, the Admiralty should not formally presume death in this way as Crabb was not employed as a naval officer at the time of his death: he was a temporary R.N.V.R. officer during the war, and had been re-employed for some period after the war, but had been released back to civil life for more than twelve months before the incident. On the other hand, the whole of the public references, both in Parliament and outside it, have spoken of Crabb as a Lieutenant-Commander or Commander. The strictly correct procedure is the second course, leaving it to those interested in Crabb's estate to apply to the Portsmouth Coroner for an inquest. In the absence of the body an inquest can be held only if the Home Secretary directs one under Section 18 of the Coroners (Amendment) Act, 1926. Under this section, if a coroner has reason to believe that a death has occurred in or near his district in such circumstances that an inquest ought to be held and that the body has been destroyed or is lying in a place from which it cannot be recovered, he may report the facts to the Home Secretary, who may order an inquest. Both the coroner and the Home Secretary have a discretion in the matter. But this procedure does not seem to be appropriate in

Crabb's case, since neither the coroner nor the Home Secretary could properly say on present information that he had reason to believe that the body had been destroyed or was lying in a place from which it cannot be recovered.

5. If an inquest were ordered, it would be the duty of the coroner to discover how, when and where Crabb came by his death. The Home Office think they would be able to persuade him to avoid awkward questions, or if there was no way of avoiding awkward questions, the coroner could at his discretion hold the inquest or part of it in camera. There would inevitably be some publicity, and it would be necessary to have as witnesses at the inquest the officer who dressed Crabb and was with him when he went into the water and possibly "Mr. Smith", who was also with him at the time. The coroner could probably in his discretion hold an inquest, if one were ordered, without a jury. Nevertheless, the first course suggested in paragraph 1, i. e. for the Admiralty to issue a certificate presuming death, would involve much less publicity even if it is irregular.

6. If Ministers decide that the second course should be followed, the question arises whether the Admiralty should make an attempt to find the body. Any thorough search, involving diving and dredging would be an extensive and expensive operation - prohibitively so - but a search by divers along the face of the jetty could be done in a week (cost about £60). This could not be kept secret: indeed if done it would be best to announce it publicly (possibly in reply to an arranged question "whether any steps have been taken to find the body").

7. No difficulty would arise over the payment mentioned in (b) of paragraph 1 so soon as letters of administration exist.

8. Examination of these matters leads to the problem of who should handle them. Clearly 'C' should not do so. If Ministers decide in favour of the first course in paragraph 2, then the Admiralty must undertake the task, and can then make the payment due to Crabb as well. If Ministers decide in favour of the second course, then the Department to appear as taking public action, in the event of an inquest, might be the Admiralty or some other authority. Naturally Admiralty Ministers would prefer that it should not be the Admiralty if it were possible to find some other authority to undertake the task.

9. There are arguments for and against the Admiralty appearing further in the matter. If the Admiralty did so, they would be identifying themselves with the incident more than ever. Many officers in the Navy are critical of what happened as spoiling the good name of the Service, and the First Lord is loath to add to their embarrassment by continuing to associate the Admiralty with the incident; particularly as the public would believe, more than they possibly do at present, that the Admiralty (though not the Ministers thereof) were associated with the Intelligence authorities in the operation. On the other hand, this ties up neatly with the information that the Admiralty gave to the Press when they commenced asking questions about Crabb, and will possibly serve in the public mind to reduce the extent to which the Admiralty are believed to have lied.

10. To complete the picture, it should be stated that the Admiralty are receiving a few letters from the general public on various aspects of the affair. These letters are being acknowledged and no further action taken.

29TH MAY, 1956

File

PRIME MINISTER

In addition to the action to be taken on the basis of Sir Edward Bridges' report, we have also to decide how to handle the problem of Commander Crabb's estate. I attach a paper on this, which has been drawn up in consultation with the Admiralty and the Home Office. Of the alternative courses there discussed, I think that the lesser evil is to commit one further irregularity and allow the Admiralty to issue a Certificate presuming death. But Admiralty Ministers will not like this, and I could not advise you to authorise it without discussion with the First Lord.

Would you be willing to hold a small meeting, to settle this, with the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and First Lord of the Admiralty? If so, I will send copies of the attached note to those Ministers as a basis for the discussion.

(Signed) NORMAN BROOK

28TH MAY, 1956.

E.R.

SIR NORMAN BROOK

Crabb

I attach the draft note for Ministers incorporating the revisions made by Sir John Lang and Sir Frank Newsam and also a couple of minor suggestions made by Sir Harold Kent who called here this afternoon and read the papers.

It does, however, occur to me that the paper still does not ^{fully have} ~~include~~ three points which were made at the meeting on Friday and which Ministers might well ask about:

- (a) An Admiralty Certificate only presumes death - not how the man died. Therefore if the body subsequently turns up there could be an inquest without any particular embarrassment to Ministers.
- (b) If Ministers decide on course (b) it is up to the coroner to decide whether or not ^{to apply for} ~~there shall be~~ an inquest. If he decides against, the estate is left without recourse to any other means for establishing death. Ministers may decide that there is some obligation to Commander Crabb's executors to establish proof of death.
- (c) Likely Press reactions. If the Press pick up the fact that the Admiralty have issued a Certificate for a man who was not ^a ~~not~~ serving officer (and there is no reason why they should) it will merely confirm the impression given by the Prime Minister's statement, namely, that the Admiralty are covering up for a secret department. If, however, there is an inquest the possibility of the Press getting hold of conflicting statements etc., is much greater.

JS41.

28TH MAY, 1956.

SECRETDRAFT PAPER FOR MINISTERSCOMMANDER CRABB

Two problems remain to be dealt with:-

- (a) the establishment of or presumption of death;
- (b) payment for the action involving Crabb's death.

2. The first is the most important. The matter cannot be left where it is because royalties from a biography about to be published will accrue to his estate, and his many creditors will want to receive their share. There are two possible courses open. The first is that the Admiralty should formally notify the Registrar General of their presumption of Crabb's death. The second is that the Government should do nothing, leaving the initiative in the hands of the Solicitors handling Crabb's affairs on behalf of his next-of-kin (Mother).

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strictly correct procedure is the second course, leaving it to those interested in Crabb's estate to apply to the Portsmouth Coroner for an inquest. In the absence of the body an inquest can be held only if the Home Secretary directs one under Section 18 of the Coroners (Amendment) Act, 1926. Under this section, if a coroner has reason to believe that a death has occurred in or near his district in such circumstances that an inquest ought to be held and that the body has been destroyed or is lying in a place from which it cannot be recovered, he may report the facts to the Home Secretary, who may order an inquest. Both the coroner and the Home Secretary have a discretion in the matter. But this procedure does not seem to be appropriate in Crabb's case, since neither the coroner nor the Home Secretary could properly say on present information that he had reason to believe that the body had been destroyed or was lying in a place from which it cannot be recovered.

5. If an inquest were ordered, it would be the duty of the coroner to discover how, when and where Crabb came by his death. The Home Office think they would be able to persuade him to avoid awkward questions, or if there was no way of avoiding awkward questions, the coroner could at his discretion hold the inquest or part of it in camera. There would inevitably be some publicity, and it would be necessary to have as witnesses at the inquest the officer who dressed Crabb and was with him when he went into the water and possibly "Mr. Smith", who was also with him at the time. The coroner could probably in his discretion hold an inquest, if one were ordered, without a jury. Nevertheless, the first course suggested in paragraph 1, i.e. for the Admiralty to issue a certificate presuming death, would involve much less publicity even if it is irregular.

6. If Ministers decide that the second course should be followed, the question arises whether the Admiralty should make an attempt to find the body. Any thorough search, involving diving and dredging would be an extensive and expensive operation - prohibitively so - but a search by divers along the face of the jetty could be done in a week (cost about £60). This could not be kept secret: indeed if done it would be best to announce it publicly (possibly in reply to an arranged question "whether any steps have been taken to find the body").

7. No difficulty would arise over the payment mentioned in (b) of paragraph 1 so soon as letters of administration exist.

8. Examination of these matters leads to the problem of who should handle them. Clearly 'C' should not do so. If Ministers decide in favour of the first course in paragraph 2, then the Admiralty must undertake the task, and can then make the payment due to Crabb as well. If Ministers decide in favour of the second course, then the Department to appear as taking public action, in the event of an inquest, might be the Admiralty or some other authority. Naturally Admiralty Ministers would prefer that it should not be the Admiralty if it were possible to find some other authority to undertake the task.

9. There are arguments for and against the Admiralty appearing further in the matter. If the Admiralty did so, they would be identifying themselves with the incident more than ever. Many officers in the Navy are critical of what happened as spoiling the good name of the Service, and the First Lord is loath to add to their embarrassment by continuing to associate the Admiralty with the incident; particularly as the public would believe, more than they possibly do at present, that the Admiralty (though not the Ministers thereof) were associated with the Intelligence authorities in the operation. On the other hand, this ties up neatly with the information that the Admiralty gave to the Press when they commenced asking questions about Crabb, and will possibly serve in the public mind to reduce the extent to which the Admiralty are believed to have lied.

10. To complete the picture, it should be stated that the Admiralty are receiving a few letters from the general public on various aspects of the affair. These letters are being acknowledged and no further action taken.

27TH MAY, 1956

E.R.**TOP SECRET**SIR EDWARD BRIDGES

We know, although we are not meant to, that Sir N. Brook has seen the Prime Minister's own copy of the report together with his marginal comments. Against the second paragraph in Section II Chronology, namely, the sentence that says "Underwater examination was carried out....." the P.M. has written "Against my orders". This is a misunderstanding. The P.M. did turn down a proposal to carry out the armour measurement operations using Catamarans. He did not, in turning this down, use any general phrase such as "anything of this kind". I have told Sir Norman Brook that the underwater business was carried out under the auspices of M.I.6 who did not seek ministerial authority for doing so. The matter was mentioned in the report both because of much reference in the press over the recent Crabb affair to the Sverdlov visit and also to show that what was proposed for Crabb was nothing new or original. I have suggested to Sir N. Brook that in view of all the complications of what happened in October 1955 (which I have not told him about, other than to indicate that the whole thing was very troublesome) it would be best to try and play this down and to tell the P.M. that it was not relevant to the business in hand.

28th May, 1956

E.R.

*Personal***TOP SECRET**SIR EDWARD BRIDGES

There was a certain amount of activity about the Crabb affair on Thursday, May 24th. The Prime Minister had apparently read the report on that day and had made some comments.

The position was not frightfully clear because two reports reached us, one through Sir Norman Brook's private office and one from Mr. Bishop, as to what the P.M. was getting excited about. The first version, reported to have been made by the private secretary who was staying at Chequers, said that the P.M. had got excited for the following reason. He recollected, it was said, that he had forbidden an operation inside the harbour and the report made no mention of this.

None of us were able to understand what the P.M. was said to have meant.

Later Mr. Bishop said that he thought that the P.M. did not mean this, but that the P.M.'s mind was running on the following lines. He, the P.M., had forbidden one operation (CLARET) and in such terms as had made it clear that adventures of a similar nature were forbidden. Moreover, the P.M. knew that the First Lord of the Admiralty had forbidden an operation inside the Harbour. Therefore, thinks the P.M., the Director of Naval Intelligence not only failed to bring to the attention of M.I.6 that the P.M. had forbidden an activity outside the harbour and "anything of this kind", but also failed to bring to their attention that the First Lord of the Admiralty had forbidden an activity inside the harbour.

The fact that the First Lord of the Admiralty had forbidden an activity inside the harbour (the armour measurement) was not referred to in the report. This could easily be explained by saying that the P.M.'s veto of CLARET was couched in such wide terms that no further example of not informing M.I.6 of a ministerial decision needed to be given: the greater included the less. It was dealt with in the evidence, and I drew

/Sir Norman Brook's

E.R.

Sir Norman Brook's attention to this fact with a suggestion that if the P.M. thought the enquiry had failed to elicit all the relevant information or was withholding the information, he might like to glance through the evidence.

[Comment. It looks as if the P.M. is determined to try and pin all the blame on the Admiralty and D.N.I. in particular.]

The P.M. had also made one or two other minor comments; he had, in particular, suggested that H.M. ships at Leningrad in October 1955 were not subjected to intensive intelligence probes. Sir Norman Brook thinks that the P.M. is being a bit potty about this because the evidence that the Russians did so is conclusive.

Sir Norman Brook was either going to send a minute to the P.M. or was thinking of doing so in the near future suggesting that the P.M. should send copies of the report to the First Lord of the Admiralty and to the Foreign Secretary requesting their observations and, at the same time, send a minute to you asking whether you would like to make any suggestions for changes in the arrangements for Ministerial responsibility for M.I.6 activities. I have told Sir Norman Brook that while you might feel able to make some preliminary observations about this you had not gone into this question during the enquiry. Indeed, if for no other reason, there was not the time.

It was also reported, though with what truth nobody knows, that the P.M. felt that the enquiry should have summoned the First Lord to give evidence. I have suggested to Sir Norman Brook that one could regard this as strictly outside the terms of reference of the enquiry, in that the Prime Minister's minute of 9th May suggests that it is "officers" of the Departments who are to give such assistance as may be required. Furthermore, the P.M.'s minute to you of 9th May says that when the report of the enquiry is available he, the P.M. will consider with the responsible Ministers what disciplinary action should be taken. It might well be, therefore, that you would not have felt it

/suitable

E.R.

suitable to have asked a Minister to have given evidence if he was going to be one of the judges of the report's recommendations. In discussion on this point with Sir Norman Brook, the suggestion was also made that as the enquiry was of a somewhat formal nature, it might not have been suitable for you to have had an off-the-record discussion with the First Lord of the Admiralty.

The latest news from Chequers, which I had from Sir Norman Brook following a scrambled telephone conversation he had had with the P.M., was that the "sun was shining" and the P.M. had stopped looking in the report for points to get a grievance about.

26th May, 1956

SECRET



26th May, 1956.

Dear Brook

Crabb.

Here are amplifications of page 1 of the draft statement to clarify the Admiralty practice of presuming death.

I have also modified the paragraph about a possible search for the body to take account of my expert's report.

I have assumed that Newsam will re-bush the reference in the draft to inquests when bodies are not available.

Copies go to Kirkpatrick and Newsam.

Yours sincerely

W. J. M. G.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook,
G.C.B.

SECRET

SECRETDRAFT PAPER FOR MINISTERS.Crabb.New paragraph 3.

3. The first course involves making use of the [extra-statutory] procedure which has existed for some time between the Admiralty and the Registrar General of Births and Deaths. When a Naval officer or man disappears in circumstances which leave no doubt in the mind of the naval authorities that he is dead, though the body cannot be found, the Admiralty send a form to the Registrar General indicating that they are presuming death for official purposes. The Admiralty are also prepared to furnish to a person prima facie entitled to it, on request, a certificate that X "is presumed by the Admiralty for official purposes to have died on". This is a well understood arrangement (on practical grounds a good arrangement though there is no legal backing for it). The solicitors acting for Mrs. Crabb (Mother) have asked the Admiralty for a certificate of this kind.

4. Strictly, the Admiralty should not formally presume death in this way as Crabb was not employed as a Naval officer at the time of his death: he was a Temporary R.N.V.R. officer during the war, and had been re-employed for some period after the war, but had been released back to civil life for more than twelve months before the incident. On the other hand, *[then take]* *in A - A*]

(Re-number succeeding paragraphs).

[old 4]

6. If Ministers decide that the second course should be followed, the question arises whether the Admiralty should make an attempt to find the body. Any thorough search, involving diving and dredging would be an extensive and expensive operation - prohibitively so, but a search by divers along the face of the jetty could be done in a week (cost about £60). This could not be kept secret: indeed if done it would be best to announce/.....

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SECRET

-2-



announce it publicly (possibly in reply to an arranged question "whether any steps have been taken to find the body").

7. No difficulty would arise.....

SECRET

Home Office,
Whitehall,
S.W.1

26th May, 1956.

Secret

My dear Bur Crabb

As we agreed at our meeting last night, I have revised the paragraphs of the note for Ministers dealing with the question of the Coroner's inquest. I attach a copy of the revised paragraphs.

I am writing similarly to John Lang.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Newsam

The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook, G.C.B.

E.R.

Revised Paragraph 3

~~Strictly, the Admiralty should not formally~~
 presume death, as Crabb was not employed as a Naval
 officer at the time of his death (he was a Temporary
 R.N.V.R. officer during the war, and had been
 re-employed for some period after the war, but had
 been released back to civil life for more than
 twelve months before the incident). ^A On the other
 hand, the whole of the public references, both in
 Parliament and outside it, have spoken of Crabb as
 a Lieutenant Commander or Commander. The strictly
 correct procedure is the second course, leaving it
 to those interested in Crabb's estate to apply to
 the Portsmouth Coroner for an inquest. In the
 absence of the body an inquest can be held only if
 the Home Secretary directs one under section 18 of
 the Coroners (Amendment) Act, 1926. Under this
 section, if a coroner has reason to believe that
 a death has occurred in or near his district in such
 circumstances that an inquest ought to be held and
 that the body has been destroyed or is lying in a
 place from which it cannot be recovered, he may
 report the facts to the Home Secretary, who may
 order an inquest. Both the coroner and the Home
 Secretary have a discretion in the matter. But this
 procedure does not seem to be appropriate in Crabb's
 case, since neither the coroner nor the Home Secretary
 could properly say on present information that he had
 reason to believe that the body had been destroyed
 or was lying in a place from which it cannot be
 recovered.


5. If an inquest were ordered, it would be the
 duty of the coroner to discover how, when and where
 Crabb came by his death. The Home Office think

/they

E.R.

they would be able to persuade him to avoid awkward questions, or if there was no way of avoiding awkward questions, the coroner could at his discretion hold the inquest or part of it in camera. There would inevitably be some publicity, and it would be necessary to have as witnesses at the inquest the officer who dressed Crabb and was with him when he went into the water and possibly "Mr. Smith", who was also with him at the time. The coroner could probably in his discretion hold an inquest, if one were ordered, without a jury. Nevertheless the first course suggested in paragraph 1, i.e. for the Admiralty to issue ~~to the Registrar General~~ a certificate presuming death, would involve much less publicity even if it is irregular. A

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TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

I have read the report of Sir Edward Bridges' enquiry into the "frogman" incident.

You will not expect comments from me on his findings, but you may find it helpful to have from me suggestions about the next steps to be taken.

Sir Edward Bridges' recommendations are of two kinds:-

- (i) Those which apportion blame between the individuals concerned in this incident; and
- (ii) those which are concerned with possible changes in procedure and organisation to reduce the risk that such an incident may occur again.

Those in group (i) are the more urgent. Those in group (ii) can be considered at rather greater leisure.

I therefore suggest that you send copies of this report to the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty with a minute asking them to consider, in the light of the report, what disciplinary action they think it necessary to take against persons serving in their Departments. (The minute to the Foreign Secretary should in terms cover M.I.6.) You should ask them to let you know what they propose before any action is taken; the special reason for this is that, as two separate authorities will be concerned, you will wish to assure yourself that comparable standards and criteria are being applied by each. When the two Ministers have reported what they would propose to do you may wish to hold a meeting with them at which their separate recommendations can be considered jointly. This might be foreshadowed in the minute which you send them now.

A rather different procedure may be required for considering the recommendations in group (ii).

Sir Edward Bridges has not himself proposed new procedures,

/the Departments

the Departments may not be able, separately, to work out what new procedures are required in order to give effect to his general suggestions. In any event the problem goes a little wider than the Foreign Office and the Admiralty; two other Departments at least, are involved. I think it may be necessary for you to ask someone to make a further report on this, after consultation with the Foreign Office, Home Office, Service Departments, M.I.5 and M.I.6. I will, if I may, make a separate submission to you later on this point.

(Signed, NORMAN THOMAS)

23.5.56

E.R.**SECRET**Note for Record

I discussed this today with Sir John Lang and Sir Thomas Padmore.

There have been developments since Lang wrote his letter of 15th May. It now appears that substantial funds may accrue to Crabb's estate, as a result of royalties from a book which is being written about him; and that creditors wishing to make claims against these will have an interest in seeking to get his death established. Two alternatives are open to us. The Admiralty could give the Registrar General a certificate of presumption of death. This is the course which would normally be followed if Crabb had been a serving Officer; it would be a somewhat irregular procedure in this case, since Crabb was no longer in the service of the Admiralty. Alternatively (and this is the course which the Home Office would prefer) the solicitors who are asking for such a certificate could be told that their appropriate course is to invite the Portsmouth Coroner to apply to the Home Office for leave to hold an inquest notwithstanding that the body has not been found.

We agreed this morning that the choice between these alternatives must be decided by Ministers, and that for this purpose the Admiralty should produce a short paper setting out the pros and cons of each alternative course. This paper will raise as a consequential point, the question whether Departmental responsibility for clearing up these remaining issues should be assumed by the Admiralty. On that point we agreed this morning that, as there is much which the Admiralty will in any event have to do, the balance of the argument lies on the side of entrusting the whole affair to the Admiralty.

Lang will send me his paper. When it comes to hand, I will ask the Prime Minister to convene a small meeting to consider it. The only Ministers who need be asked to this are the Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and First Lord of the Admiralty.

B.

23rd May, 1956.

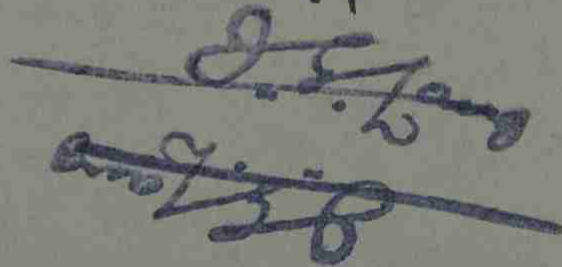
23rd May, 1956.

Dear Newsam,

I spoke to Norman Brook this morning about the discussion we had last night on Crabb. In the course of this morning's talk it seemed at least possible that Ministers would prefer a formal notification of presumption of death by the Admiralty as involving the least publicity. I think personally there is a very good chance that we could get away with this, and provided Ministers know what is at stake I should be willing to do it.

The eventual arrangement agreed between Brook and me is that Ministers, i.e. the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Home Secretary, First Lord, should consider a short paper on the Crabb sequelae. Attached is a copy of the paper which I have sent under cover of a note to Brook, of which I also enclose a copy.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Frank Newsam, K.C.B., K.B.E.,
C.V.O., M.C.



SECRET

23rd May, 1956.

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Dear Brook

Crabb.

As promised at our talk this morning I attach the draft of the paper which Ministers might consider in order to deal with certain problems which still remain.

I am discussing with our experts what would be involved in trying to find the body by dredging, and may have a sentence or two to add on this tomorrow.

I thought it fair to send a copy of this letter to Frank Newsam because the suggestion which arose in our talk this morning is not quite in harmony with the meeting he attended in my room yesterday, and as he will need to brief his Minister it is fair that he should know from the start the shape of the reference being made to Ministers.

X I have also explained the position to the First Lord.

Copies of this note have also gone to Kirkpatrick and Padmore.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature, likely "John A. G. Jones", written in dark ink.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook, G.C.B.

SECRET

SECRET

DRAFT PAPER FOR MINISTERS.Crabb.

Two problems remain to be dealt with:-

(a) The establishment of or presumption
of death;

(b) Payment for the action involving Crabb's death.

2. The first is the most important. The matter cannot be left where it is because royalties from a biography about to be published will accrue to his estate, and his many creditors will want to receive their share. There are two possible courses open. The first is that the Admiralty should formally notify the Registrar General of their presumption of Crabb's death, ~~at the usual stage after his disappearance.~~ The second is that the Government should do nothing, leaving the initiative in the hands of the Solicitors handling Crabb's affairs on behalf of his next-of-kin (Mother).

3. ~~Strictly, the Admiralty should not formally presume death, as Crabb was not employed as a Naval officer at the time of his death (he was a Temporary R.N.V.R. officer during the war, and had been re-employed for some period after the war, but had been released back to civil life for more than twelve months before the incident).~~ On the other hand, the whole of the public references, both in Parliament and outside it, have spoken of Crabb as a Lieutenant Commander or Commander. The strictly correct procedure is the second course, leaving it to those interested in Crabb's estate to apply to the Portsmouth Coroner for an inquest. In the absence of the body the Coroner may or may not be willing to hold an inquest. If he is not willing, the estate would be powerless to take the matter further, it being presumed that the High Court would not contemplate an action formally to presume death. if the Coroner declined to hold an inquest, at any rate not for a long time. If the Coroner is willing to hold an inquest

the/....

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SECRET



the Home Office would be likely to agree, but would ~~the~~ expect ~~the~~ to persuade the Coroner to avoid any awkward questions. Alternatively, if there was no way of avoiding awkward questions, that part of the case which touched on ~~Secret~~ information could be held in camera. An inquest would however involve the presence of the officer who dressed Crabb and was with him when he went into the water, and possibly "Mr. Smith" too, who was also with him at the time. The first course, i.e. the Admiralty to presume death to the Registrar General, minimises publicity if it were successful, even if it is irregular. The second course inevitably involves some publicity.

4. If Ministers decide that the second course should be followed, the question arises whether the Admiralty should dredge for the body, i.e. as evidence that an attempt has been made to try and find the body. This would be an extensive and expensive operation.

7. No difficulty would arise over the payment mentioned in (b) of paragraph 1 so soon as letters of administration exist.

8. Examination of these matters leads to the problem of who should handle them. Clearly "C" should not do so. If Ministers decide in favour of the first course in paragraph 2, then the Admiralty must undertake the task, and can then make the payment due to Crabb as well. If Ministers decide in favour of ^{the second course,} [letting matters develop into an inquest], then the department to appear as taking public action ^{in the event of an inquest,} might be the Admiralty or some other authority. Naturally Admiralty Ministers would prefer that it should not be the Admiralty if it were possible to find some other authority to undertake the task.

9. There are arguments for and against the Admiralty appearing further in the matter. If the Admiralty did so, they would be identifying themselves with the incident more than ever. Many officers in the Navy are critical of what

happened/....

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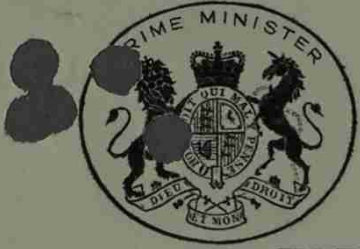
SECRET



happened as spoiling the good name of the Service, and the First Lord is loath to add to their embarrassment by continuing to associate the Admiralty with the incident; particularly as the public would believe, more than they possibly do at present, that the Admiralty (though not the Ministers thereof) were associated with the Intelligence authorities in the operation. On the other hand, this ties up neatly with the information that the Admiralty gave to the Press when they commenced asking questions about Crabb, and will possibly serve ⁱⁿ the public mind to reduce the extent to which the Admiralty are believed to have lied.

10. To complete the picture, it should be stated that the Admiralty are receiving a few letters from the general public on various aspects of the affair. These letters are being acknowledged and no further action taken.

SECRET



TOP SECRET

and personal

*See Mr. Brook has now
initiated this - the P.M.
about this - P.A. 18th/28th*

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,

May 20, 1956.

Dear John,

...

I enclose a copy of a letter I have sent to Derek Mitchell, which is self-explanatory. I imagine that the Prime Minister will want Brook's views at some time. I believe Brook has not had a proper opportunity to study the report, and you may care to suggest to him that, if time allows, he might like to see it before we send it to the Prime Minister. (This suggestion is, of course, unnecessary if a copy of it has since found its way to you).

*Yours sincerely
Freddie Bunker.*

J.J.B. Hunt, Esq.,
Cabinet Office.



TOP SECRET
PERSONAL

10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,

May 20, 1956.

Dear Derek,

I have told the Prime Minister that Bridges has now submitted his report on the Crabb affair. The Prime Minister decided that as he is in Wiltshire for the next few days, it would not be safe for him to keep the report there for study, and that he would therefore not look at it until he goes to Chequers, which is likely to be on the coming Wednesday. He appreciated that Bridges will then be away, and he has no present intention of troubling Bridges about it during the coming week. I dare say that he will want to discuss it with Bridges, and perhaps others, some time in the week beginning May 28.

*Yours
Frederic Baring*

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury.

TOP SECRET

MR. BISHOP

I submit herewith my report to the Prime Minister in reply to his minute of 9th May.

The Prime Minister will notice that we have referred to the members of "C"'s staff by initials - all except the egregious Mr. Smith whose name has already been in the press. I have done this at "C"'s request. There is, of course, no mystery about who the people concerned are.

I am not sure what procedure the Prime Minister will wish to adopt about this report. But we have only three flimsies. If the P.M. wants copies circulated to a number of people perhaps you will let us know fairly soon in order that the necessary copies can be made.

I think you know that I had arranged to be away for the week after Whitsun (I shall be at my home until Tuesday morning). If there is a likelihood that I shall be wanted during this week it would be convenient if I could be told before Tuesday morning.

EED

18th May, 1956

TOP SECRET

REPORT OF AN ENQUIRY ON AN
INTELLIGENCE OPERATION
AGAINST RUSSIAN WARSHIPS

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER

I. INTRODUCTORY

My terms of reference are set out in your Minute of 9th May, a copy of which is annexed (Appendix I). You asked me to carry out on your behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth Harbour on 19th April, the enquiry to include (a) what authority was given for the operation, and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until 3rd May.

I have seen 12 witnesses. A list, which provides a key to the initials used in this report, is given in Appendix II. A summary of the evidence, which has been seen by the witnesses, is available if required.

I acknowledge gratefully the great help which I have had and the candour with which my enquiries were answered.

I think I can best discharge my task if I give first a bare chronology of the main events: and then set out for the consideration of yourself and the other responsible Ministers the essential points about each of the main issues which seem to me to arise.

I have tried to do this as objectively as I can, with as little intrusion as possible of personal judgment. I have also done my best to present matters as they must have appeared to the officers concerned at the moment of action, without drawing on hind sight.

II. CHRONOLOGY

December 1954

The Admiralty notified intelligence organisations of their requirements to have information about the under-water noise characteristics of Russian warships. This requirement was given first priority by the Admiralty.

October 1955

Russian cruiser Sverdlov visited Portsmouth. Under-water examination was carried out and produced useful results. At the same time, H.M. ships visited Leningrad where they were subjected to intensive intelligence probes by the Russians, including the use of divers.

22 February 1956

A meeting was held at the Admiralty to discuss the rate opportunity for intelligence procurement presented by the Russian naval visits to Western European naval ports.

Mid-March 1956

Another meeting was held at the Admiralty about intelligence operations to be carried out against the Russian warships at Portsmouth, and specifically mentioning the use of frogmen. Mr. D., an experienced M.I.6. officer, attended this meeting at which the Admiralty stated their readiness to give unofficial facilities. Mr. Smith got into touch with Commander Crabb at about this time to see if he would be willing to carry out an operation against the Soviet cruiser bringing B. and K. to Portsmouth.

6th April 1956

The First Lord asked the Prime Minister for authority to carry out operation CLARET against the Russian warships.

10th April 1956

C.W.E. discussed with F.O.A. a minute setting out the list of possible operations to be carried out during the B. and K. visit. (Appendix III(a)) As a result of this conversation M.I.6. gained the impression that Foreign Office clearance had been given for the proposed operations against the Soviet warships.

12th April 1956

The Prime Minister minuted to the First Lord of the Admiralty in connection with the proposal to mount operation CLARET, "I am sorry, but we cannot do anything of this kind on this occasion". The Foreign Office were aware of this decision. M.I.6 were not.

Tuesday,
17th April

Commander Crabb and Mr. Smith arrived in the evening at Portsmouth and went to the Sallyport Hotel where they both registered in their own names and addresses. After doing this, Crabb telephoned a naval officer (from H.M.S. Vernon) who was going to be asked to give unofficial help in the operation. On this day Mr. D. was introduced to the Chief Constable and Chief Superintendent of Portsmouth Police.

Wednesday,
18th April

The Russian ships berthed at Portsmouth. It had been intended that Commander Crabb should carry out a dive early in the morning but our own security precautions prevented this from being done. A practice dive was carried out in the early evening when Crabb approached close under water to the Russian ships but returned to his launching boat after about half an hour in order to make some alterations to the weights which he was carrying. The naval officer, who was giving unofficial help, observed that very little oxygen had been used and that Crabb appeared to be in good trim. That evening Crabb visited some friends living at Havant.

Thursday,
19th April

Mr. Smith and Commander Crabb left their hotel just before six in the morning. They picked up the naval officer who was helping them and went into the dockyard. The dive commenced just before seven o'clock, when Commander Crabb had in his oxygen cylinder enough gas for two hours under water. His operating instructions were to restrict himself to an examination of the rudder and screws of

the Russian cruiser and it was estimated that this would not take more than one hour.

By a quarter past nine when Commander Crabb had not returned, Mr. Smith and the naval officer realised that there had been a serious mishap and they carried out as best they could a search of the area. Throughout the whole of their time on the boat and during their search, they neither heard nor saw any sign of abnormal activities from the Russians.

The mishap was reported to M.I.6 and to N.I.D.'s representative at Portsmouth who arranged a further search with a motor launch. N.I.D.'s representative explained to M.I.6 that a full search with all available facilities could be arranged, but it was not advised, since it would reveal the whole story without there being any hope of saving Commander Crabb (who was weighted). Later the naval officer who had been helping reported the occurrence to the Captain of H.M.S. Vernon, who immediately acquainted C.-in-C., Portsmouth.

During the day Mr. Smith returned to the hotel, paid his bill and Commander Crabb's and removed their baggage.

"C"'s Deputy was informed of the position at about 3 o'clock and D.N.I. was asked to join a meeting. Meantime, F.O.A. was requested to inform the Foreign Office of what had happened. He informed Mr. Dean.

Friday,
20th April

Continuous consultation between M.I.6, F.O.A., M.I.5 and D.N.I.

Saturday,
21st April

The meetings between M.I.6 and D.N.I. continued. In the evening Admiral Kotov, who had spent the day informally with Admiral Burnett (Chief of Staff to C.-in-C., Portsmouth) said, over the coffee after dinner, that three of his sailors had seen a frogman about 8 o'clock in the morning of the 19th, but he was not proposing to make any fuss about it or to lodge a complaint.

Sunday,
22nd April

Mr. Dean spoke on the telephone to Sir I. Kirkpatrick, who was at Chequers. This conversation was in connection

as Sir I. Kirkpatrick had no knowledge whatsoever of the frogman operation Mr. Dean made no reference to the mishap at Portsmouth.

Monday,
23rd April

F.O.A. was informed of Admiral Kotov's comment to Admiral Burnett.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick was informed by Mr. Dean of the presumed loss of Crabb.

Tuesday,
24th April

Mr. Pendock (Commander Crabb's employer) rang up the naval officer at Havant with whom Commander Crabb had spent the evening of 18th April, to seek news of him. This naval officer reported the matter to the Admiralty.

At this stage both M.I.6 and D.N.I. agreed that it was of the utmost importance to keep Commander Crabb's activities quiet until after the Russian visit was over and they both agreed that the only hope of preventing early publicity and embarrassment to H.M.G. would be for the Admiralty to assume responsibility for action and admit sponsorship, but D.N.I. still hesitated to accept responsibility on the Admiralty's behalf.

"C"'s Deputy had discussion with F.O.A., in the course of which references were made to the Foreign Office clearance.

Wednesday,
25th April

A meeting was held by "C" in the morning with D.N.I., the Director-General of M.I.5, and F.O.A. Three main conclusions emerged from this discussion. They were:

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RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

- (i) D.N.I. agreed to submit to V.C.N.S. that the Admiralty should at once assume responsibility for covering the operation;
- (ii) It was agreed that if the matter were put to higher authority in one Department it would, at the same time, have to go up to higher authority in the other Departments concerned;
- (iii) It was agreed that the top priority was to prevent the story breaking while the Russians were still in England;

That afternoon V.C.N. S. agreed that the Admiralty would have to provide cover and he also agreed that a naval officer, Captain Sarell, should go to see Mr. Pendock to try and persuade him to keep quiet. At the meeting that this was decided "C" was present, together with D.N.I., the Director-General of M.I.5 and F.O.A.

Thursday,
26th April

No developments took place other than the not unimportant consideration that it began to look as if it were possible that the story might not break.

Friday,
27th April

"C" held a meeting with D.N.I., Captain Sarell, the Director-General of M.I.5 and F.O.A. A brief was drafted which it was proposed that the Admiralty would use if they had to answer any questions about Crabb. Later in the day the Secretary to the Admiralty was informed of the incident and was asked to approve the draft brief. He said he would decide on Monday, 30th April, whether or not to inform the First Lord.

Captain Sarell informed Commander Crabb's mother of the presumed death.

After discussion in Portsmouth with M.I.6, which was directed to seeking local advice on appropriate action, Superintendent Lamport of Portsmouth Police removed pages from the hotel register.

Mr. Smith had signed his correct name and address in this register and as his friends and relatives knew that he was "notionally" employed by the Foreign Office, the register provided incontrovertible evidence that would have linked Crabb's disappearance with the Foreign Office.

The Russian ships left Portsmouth.

Saturday,
28th April

Captain Sarell interviewed Commander Crabb's ex-wife.

Sunday,
29th April

The press began to ask the Admiralty questions, and they answered these questions on the lines of the brief which had been agreed on 27th April.

Monday,
30th April

There were reports about Crabb's disappearance in the press - mostly speculative.

The Secretary to the Admiralty decided not to put the case to the First Lord. His view was that this had been essentially an M.I.6 operation, although the Admiralty had been forced to assume shared responsibility. Sir J. Lang learned that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had decided not to tell the Foreign Secretary until the Admiralty told their Minister. On the picture as presented to him, he thought that the risk of a bad break was small and so he decided to carry the responsibility himself and not to tell the First Lord.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick felt the responsibility for the operation lay with the Admiralty and that it was for these reasons that the Admiralty had decided to accept responsibility for the cover story - they had not, so far as he knew, spoken to the Foreign Office about this. But the fact that they had decided to put out the cover story suggested to him that it was primarily for them (the Admiralty) to approach their Ministers.

1st May

Press stories continued, but no hard facts were reported which could give cause for serious alarm.

2nd May

Press reporters discovered that pages had been removed from the register of the hotel where Mr. Smith and Commander Crabb stayed and the hotel proprietor and the police were vigorously questioned. It was clear from the questions asked that the press knew that Commander Crabb had stayed at the hotel in the company of a man named Mr. Smith.

3rd May

The morning papers gave considerable publicity to the hotel register incident and it was clear that an all-out press campaign was about to begin with the identity of Mr. Smith as one of the central features.

No hope could now be entertained that the matter might be kept quiet.

Later that afternoon, the First Lord of the Admiralty was informed and in the absence of the Foreign Secretary on duty Mr. Dean told the Minister of State.

4th May

The Prime Minister learned what had happened.

III. THE OPERATION ITSELF

It is right to start with a few general remarks about the operation itself.

Since December, 1954, one of the standing intelligence requirements notified to M.I.6 by the Admiralty has been information about the under-water noise characteristics of Russian warships. Indeed, this comes first in the list of Admiralty requirements since the information is necessary for the effective use of certain types of mine and torpedo. The news that M. Bulganin and M. Krushchev were coming to Portsmouth in a Russian cruiser provided an important opportunity to obtain this information since Russian warships are rarely within range of our Intelligence Service.

It is perhaps of interest that when British warships visited Leningrad in October, 1955, the Soviet authorities made a great effort to obtain intelligence information about our ships. It was obvious that most of the visitors to the ships were naval personnel or technicians. I have been given detailed particulars about this. For example, constant efforts were made to break away from conducted parties and a visitor who had disclaimed knowledge of English would constantly come out with a question such as "How is your squid stabilised" and one visitor was found with a paper parcel under his arm which was found to contain a camera. An unnecessarily large number of divers laid a mooring buoy near the ships. Such instances could be multiplied.

The conclusion which it is sought to draw from this is that the Russians would expect our Intelligence Service to make use of any corresponding opportunity open to them to obtain information about Russian ships. And when the Sverdlov visited Portsmouth in October 1955 valuable information had been obtained about her under-water characteristics.

How much relevance has this to the matters which I have to enquire into? Setting aside the all important issue whether it was appropriate to carry out a frogman operation on the occasion of the visit of Mr. Bulganin and M. Krushchev, it is, I think, fair to say that from the point of view of those whose duty it is to collect information by covert means there was nothing unusual about the character of the operation proposed. Indeed, one can go further and say that provided the operation was carried out with due precautions there was no reason why it should be attended by any special risks.

This is perhaps the place to record that due precautions were not taken in carrying out this operation.

The first witness I saw was "C". His attitude throughout has been that the operation which had failed with such lamentable consequences had been carried out by the organisation of which he was the head; and he felt, therefore, that the blame should be taken by him and was reluctant to see any part of it fall on any of his subordinates. Without waiting for any questions from me he stated bluntly that members of his staff responsible for carrying out this operation had failed to observe a number of precautions which, had they been taken, should have made the operation "unattributable", i.e., if it failed there would have been no connection with any official organisation.

Among the points which "C" mentioned in this connection were that Mr. Smith, the operator in immediate charge of the operation, should not have signed his real name and address in the hotel register. Furthermore, Commander Crabb should not have been allowed to spend so much time in Portsmouth where he was likely to meet people he knew. He was brought to Portsmouth on the 17th April with a view to the operation being carried out on the following morning when the Russian ships anchored at Portsmouth. But Mr. D., Mr. Smith's superior officer, soon saw that our own

security precautions would make it necessary to postpone the attempt until a later date. This postponement could have been avoided if the operation had been more fully discussed with the Security Service.

Again, from the things which have come out in the press in the last week or so as to what Crabb said about his work for M.I.6 to some of his associates in civil life, there seems some reason to doubt whether he was altogether a wise choice for this kind of work.

I have seen the two officers concerned, Mr. D. and Mr. Smith. While they both have certain points to make in defence of some of the actions criticised, they both agree that proper precautions had not been taken to make the operation unattributable and to provide an adequate cover story in the event of a mishap.

I feel bound to mention this since, had due precautions been observed in carrying out the operation, there is no reason why its failure should have involved the Government in any way or caused any embarrassment.

IV. AUTHORITY FOR THE OPERATION

The arrangements in M.I.6. for obtaining authority for delicate operations - which means operations which might have serious political consequences - are as follows: I confine myself for brevity's sake to operations in this country.

It is the well understood practice that what are known as the responsible production branches of M.I.6 carry out provisional planning for such delicate operations, and when a stage in the planning has been reached which enables the operation to be clearly described, they submit it to the Foreign Office Adviser (known as F.O.A.). The holder of this post is a Foreign Office official seconded for a period of years to work in M.I.6.

F.O.A. has authority to approve cases submitted to him if he thinks fit without reference to the Foreign Office. If he regards the cases as of sufficient importance, he submits them to the appropriate Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. This is now Mr. Patrick Dean, who told me he would normally submit such cases to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State.

F.O.A. said that he is not expected to pick out from the papers which he sees those cases which in his opinion require either his or Foreign Office approval: but that it is the practice of M.I.6. to bring to his specific notice those which they consider require Foreign Office approval.

There is no set practice in M.I.6 for seeking the views of F.O.A. Cases are put to him either in an oral interview or on the telephone or sometimes in writing. Submission to F.O.A. does not necessarily entail a minute addressed to him. If a dossier of papers is referred to him it is likely that he will give his views in writing. But if the more usual practice is followed and the reference is done orally, the fact that F.O.A. has given clearance will be recorded by the officer concerned of M.I.6, ~~and appended to the present case~~

The delicate and important cases which involve reference to the Foreign Office are usually submitted to that Department formally, but the draft of the formal submission will be done by F.O.A. himself after due consultation with his colleagues in M.I.6.

The number of cases formally submitted by F.O.A. for the approval of his superior officers in the Foreign Office is relatively small.

There are no doubt others in which F.O.A. will have informal discussion with the Foreign Office before deciding either that formal Foreign Office authority is necessary or that the case can be approved without this. And there are cases which are dealt with by F.O.A.'s assistant about which I have felt it unnecessary to enquire. Equally there are rare cases which are dealt with direct between 'C' and the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office.

I come now to 10th April when an officer of M.I.6 holding the position known as C.W.E. went to see F.O.A. and showed him a minute about the visit of M. Bulganin and M. Krushchev. I attach a copy of it. (Appendix III(s))

It will be seen that the subject matter is confined to clearances required for action during the B. and K. visit.

Paragraph 2 of the minute sets out eight items and the clearance position of each-

Item 2(c) reads as follows:

"Soviet warships: Agreement reached with N.I.D. on subdivision of responsibilities between N.I.D. and M.I.6. N.I.D. have given blessing to our plans and promised all facilities. We have not so far informed the F.O. of our plans in this respect."

Item 2(d) dealt with the Soviet aircraft.

Behind the minute was a set of memoranda which gave details of the proposed operations, the first page of which referred to frogman operations.

It is agreed between C.W.E. and F.O.A. that their conversation lasted for not more than ten minutes and that F.O.A. did not turn over the minute and study the supporting memoranda.

F.O.A. told me that he thought that C.W.E. was showing him the list for information and not for clearance and that C.W.E. was on his way to take the minute to "C" for authority. He stated that he was not asked to give clearance for the frogman operation and that he knew nothing about the operation.

C.W.E.'s account of the interview is that it was his habit to consult F.O.A. on doubtful cases and that he had minuted his section that clearance on all operations at the time of the B. and K. visit would have to be obtained from the Foreign Office. He showed F.O.A. the list of operations and how each operation stood in the matter of clearance. He asked F.O.A. if he had any objection to what was proposed although he did not or may not have used the word clearance. F.O.A. had asked whether the operation against the warships had been tied up with the Admiralty and he had been given an assurance that it had. The conversation had then turned on to the Claridges operation.

C.W.E. left the room believing that clearance had been given and wrote a minute (Appendix III(b)) which said that he had cleared Items 2(c) Soviet Warships and 2(d) Soviet Aircraft with F.O.A. This minute was not shown to F.O.A. nor was a copy sent to him.

Both C.W.E. and F.O.A. agree that there was a serious misunderstanding. Both, I think, regard the other as being more to blame for it. F.O.A. emphasises that he was not specifically asked for clearance and that since it was his practice to go thoroughly into all cases submitted to him, he does not see how C.W.E. could have gone away with the impression that he had

cleared the warships operation. It is a fair point that the trouble would have been avoided had C.W.E. explained the operation more specifically. C.W.E. on the other hand takes the view that it was abundantly clear from the minute that he was asking for clearance, nor did he see any real difference between the procedure on this occasion and what had happened on a number of previous occasions. Again, if F.O.A. thought that he was not being asked for clearance at this interview, why did he not ask how and when it was intended that clearance should be sought?

No doubt some measure of responsibility for the misunderstanding must lie with both officers. If I am expected to go further than this, I would direct attention to the system in force. It is no doubt desirable to encourage oral discussion in an organisation such as M.I.6 and to limit paper work about secret operations. But it is surely important that the conclusion of any discussion should be written by the officer responsible for the decision - all the more so where he represents another department. No more is called for than a word or two, an initial and a date. This might help to counteract any tendency towards laxity in obtaining F.O.A.'s clearance. I am sure that the procedure should be revised in this way. If this simple practice had been in force there could have been no misunderstanding as to whether or not Foreign Office clearance had been given.

Though it may seem to be rather a hard doctrine, I think that in the last resort an officer in F.O.A.'s position who has the duty of giving authority on behalf of another Department has a special responsibility to satisfy himself that a rather informal system such as that which has been in force (and which he inherited from his predecessor) does not give rise to misunderstanding and does not encourage cases to be handled without due care. Looked at from this point of view I think that the larger share of the blame must attach to F.O.A.

One point is quite clear, namely that "C" himself had no possible reason to doubt that clearance had been obtained from the Foreign Office.

I must add a further point. I was told by "C"'s Deputy that in a conversation he had had with F.O.A. on either the evening of 19th April or on the morning of the 20th he had made it clear to F.O.A. that in the opinion of M.I.6, F.O.A. had cleared this operation. This was repeated in a conversation a few days later. F.O.A., who accepts this evidence, admitted that he had not at any time informed Mr. Dean or any other Foreign Office official that M.I.6 had regarded him as having cleared the operation against the warships. Indeed, the point did not emerge fully until after the start of Sir Norman Brook's enquiry. I found it difficult to understand why F.O.A. had not done this. He repudiated any suggestion that this was due to lack of frankness on his part but I think it was certainly a mistake that he did not do so.

The fact that he did not do so contributed to the delay in informing Ministers of the failure of the operation. For the evidence of the Foreign Office officials makes it clear that if on 20th April F.O.A. had reported to Mr. Dean that M.I.6 regarded him as having given clearance to the Operation, the Foreign Office officials would have taken the view that the attention of the Foreign Secretary should at once have been drawn to the matter. This point comes out in the ensuing section.

V. WHY WAS THE FAILURE OF THE OPERATION NOT REPORTED TO
MINISTERS UNTIL 4th MAY?

The answer to this question is bedevilled by the fact that the Admiralty regarded the Foreign Office as responsible for the operation, while the Foreign Office thought the Admiralty were responsible. How did it come about that these contrary views were held?

It is true that the operation was carried out in response to an Admiralty requirement, but the operation of April 1956 - like the operation of October 1955 - was being carried out by "C" 's organisation, and the help given to the operation by the Admiralty was described as unofficial. At the stage when the operation was being planned, both the Admiralty and M.I.6 took the view that the operation was one for which the Foreign Secretary's approval was required, always assuming that a Minister's approval was necessary.

In the Admiralty's view, therefore, the operation was essentially one for which the Foreign Office were responsible, M.I.6 being an organisation for which the Foreign Secretary is responsible. After the Admiralty took over responsibility on 25th April for providing cover they regarded themselves as having a shared responsibility with the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Office (as distinct from M.I.6) were, as already stated, unaware until Sir Norman Brook's enquiry that F.O.A. either had - or was supposed to have - given F.O. approval to the operation. They seem to have assumed that the operation was one for which the Admiralty was responsible.

It is apparent that there is some lack of clarity about which Minister is responsible for operations in this country carried out by M.I.6 for which specific Ministerial authority has not been given. I conclude that this is a point which merits further examination. In the event, it is

clear that neither the Admiralty nor the Foreign Office officials throughout the crucial period regarded their Department as having the major or primary responsibility for the operation. The attitude of officials in each Department was that they would tell their Minister as soon as the Minister in the other Department was told - but not before. Looking back, it is perhaps a pity that the senior officials of the two Departments did not have direct discussions on this point.

I am also told by officials of both Departments that they had considerable hopes that the prompt measures taken by the Admiralty from 25th April onwards in dealing with Commander Crabb's employer and relations would prevent the matter from breaking in the press.

Again, there was the consideration that during important parts of this period Ministers were very heavily occupied in important discussions. B. and K. did not leave this country until 27th April. No doubt all these arguments have some validity. But in my discussion with the officers concerned - which of course, includes several very senior officers of great experience - I found general agreement that, apart from the greater wisdom which hindsight brings, it would have been both right and prudent to tell Ministers what had happened at a considerably earlier stage than was done. You may well come to the conclusion that this is the right view. But I cannot think that, given all the circumstances, the mistake was a very serious one. One thing is clear and that is that it is impossible to single out any one individual from the dramatis personae as deserving of special blame in this respect.

VI. OTHER MATTERS

Two other happenings in the narrative of events call for comment. The first concerns the action taken by the Portsmouth Police in removing two pages of the hotel register of the Sallyport Hotel where Commander Crabb and Mr. Smith had stayed. According to the particulars furnished to me, the Portsmouth Police were asked by M.I.6 to advise what action should be taken about the hotel register but were not authorised to act.

The discovery on 2nd May that pages had been removed from the register was the mine the firing of which finally led to the all-out press campaign. And it is thus arguable that this action by the Portsmouth Police which seems to have been taken without full authority from London, was a serious error.

I do not take this view. The discovery of Mr. Smith's address would have inevitably involved the Foreign Office. The removal of pages from the register cannot, I think, be regarded as an unreasonable precaution. This is reinforced by the fact that it became clear later that the press knew that Commander Crabb had stayed at the hotel in company with a man called Smith. I have not, therefore, thought it necessary to investigate whether the action of the Portsmouth Police was taken without due authority.

The last happening which must be commented on is one which you may be surprised that I have left to the end, namely, the fact that your decision of 12th April against operation CLARET did not become known to those who were mounting the frogman operation.

Looking at the matter first from the Foreign Office end, it is clear that if the misunderstanding between C.W.E. and F.O.A. had not occurred,

and if F.O.A. had submitted the matter to the Foreign Office as should certainly have been done, then the senior officers at the Foreign Office would have linked up your decision on the CLARET proposal with the frogman operation, and the latter would not have been allowed to go forward.

Looking at the matter now from the Admiralty end, the fact that you had ruled against CLARET was notified to the Foreign Office by the Military Branch of the Admiralty. It may be asked why D.N.I., who knew about the plans for the frogman operation, did not also communicate the decision to M.I.6. The answer is that he did not regard it as any part of his business to do so. Further, I think he took the view that higher authority did not regard the same standards or tests ^{which} ~~as~~ applied to what was done by the Admiralty as governing what should be done by M.I.6.

Many of those concerned in handling covert operations would, I think, share the view expressed in the last sentence. Nevertheless, I think you will conclude that some amendment is called for in the existing arrangements about covert operations, both as regards Ministerial authority and more generally.

While I am not asked to consider questions of organisation and could not do so without greatly widening the scope of my enquiry, I hope I shall not be thought to be going too far if I suggest certain points which seem to me to deserve investigation.

I understand that the difficulties of obtaining information abroad have led in recent years to more and more operations being mounted in this country. I think it is also accepted that the failure of an operation in this country has far more embarrassing effects than failure of an operation abroad. This is in part due to the extreme vigilance of the British press and their readiness to take every advantage of any apparent slip by any Government organisation.

It seems to me, therefore, that the degree of careful preparation and forethought necessary for all covert operations is greater in this country than elsewhere. This applies not merely to the arrangements for the operation itself, but to those aspects of the plan which are directed to ensuring "unattributability": and to the preparation of a cover story if the operation is detected.

It seems to me that the most essential point is that measures should be introduced which would ensure that proposals for covert operations in this country are in future subjected to a far more rigorous test and scrutiny by all those concerned. They might perhaps be the first assignment which "C" 's successor designate should undertake. At the same time, it would also be desirable for two related matters to be examined:

- (a) the question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations which does not seem to be altogether clear (see page 17);
- (b) arrangements to make sure that decisions given by yourself or some other Minister in regard to an operation put forward by one Department, are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments likely to be concerned.

I have also suggested that the procedure in M.I.6 for giving Foreign Office approval should be made more formal.

VII. SUMMARY

A report of this nature does not lend itself to a summary of conclusions and what follows is more by way of an epitome of the main points.

If the operation had been carried out with due precautions there was no reason why it should have been attended by any special risk. But, in fact, those who carried out the operation failed to observe a number of precautions which should have been taken. The main responsibility for this must be shared between Mr. D. and Mr. Smith [Section III].

Failure to seek the authority of the Foreign Office for the operation was due to a misunderstanding between C.W.E. and F.O.A. While both officers must share some of the blame for the misunderstanding, I suggest reasons why it may be felt that the greater part of the blame must rest with F.O.A. [Section IV].

The procedure for giving authority by F.O.A. should be made more formal [Section IV].

F.O.A. was at fault in not telling the Foreign Office at the earliest possible moment that M.I.6 was under the impression that he had given clearance for the operation [Section IV].

The delay in informing Ministers of the failure of the operation was largely due to the fact that the Admiralty regarded the Foreign Office as having been responsible for the operation while the Foreign Office thought that the Admiralty were responsible. It was not due to lack of consideration of this point by senior officials in the Departments concerned [Section V].

The reasons why your decision against operation CLARET were not notified to M.I.6 are analysed both as regards the officers concerned and as regards possible faults in organisation [Section VI].

Suggestions are made as to certain matters of organisation which might be examined. Perhaps the most important of these are measures to ensure that all proposed covert operations in this country are in future subjected to a more rigorous test and scrutiny. Another is the definition of Ministerial responsibility for operations carried out by M.I.6 in this country [Section VI].

I am much indebted to Mr. T.J. Bligh, D.S.O., O.B.E., D.S.C., and to Mr. W.R. Darracott, D.S.C., for all the help I have had from them, more particularly in connection with the hearing of witnesses and the notes of evidence.

APPENDIX I

COPY

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MINUTE
SERIAL No. M.104/56

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES

I wish you to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on April 19.

Your enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation, and
- (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until May 4.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

I have asked the Ministers in charge of the Departments concerned to give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers in their Departments give you all the assistance you may require in carrying out this enquiry.

A.E.

May 9, 1956

APPENDIX II

TOP SECRET

List of Witnesses, some of whom were seen on more than one occasion

Foreign Office

Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Mr. P.H. Dean, C.M.G.

F.O.A. - Mr. M.S. Williams, C.M.G. (Foreign Office Adviser to M.I.6)

M.I.6

"C"

"C" 's Deputy

C.W.E. (The officer responsible for obtaining the clearance of
the Foreign Office for the operation.)

Mr. D. (The officer in charge of the operation)

Mr. Smith (the operator)

Admiralty

Vice-Admiral Sir William Davis, K.C.B., D.S.O.,
Vice Chief of Naval Staff

Sir John Lang, G.C.B.

D.N.I. - Rear-Admiral J.G.T. Inglis, O.B.E.,
Director of Naval Intelligence

(N.I.D. - Naval Intelligence Division)

M.I.5

The Director General

COPYAPPENDIX III(a)

Source R.O.S.
No. 493
Date 10.4.56

SPECIAL

MINUTE SHEET

DISTRIBUTION
(Addressees to
initial and date
before passing)

Visit of BULGANIN and KHRUSHCHEV

1. I understand from SO/V.C.S.S. that you have agreed to deal with any clearances required for action by us during the B and K visit. It is important that we have any clearances that are required as soon as possible so that we can plan the details.

C.W.E.

Copy: D/C.N.E.

D/C.N.E.

2. The present situation is as follows:-

R.O.S.

(a) Microphones in CLARIDGES's: F.O. clearance obtained by M.I.5

C.W.E.

(b) Telephone tapping: No requests for special telephone facilities have yet been made. If they are made and we wish to tap them, F.O. clearance will be necessary

Para.2(a). We spoke about this. Will you please explain to F.O.A. the restriction on discussion of this? This now virtually under ours, and not M.I.5's control.

(c) Soviet warships: Agreement reached with N.I.D. on subdivision of responsibilities between N.I.D. and M.I.6. N.I.D. have given blessing to our plans and promised all facilities. We have not so far informed the F.O. of our plans in this respect.

P.

(d) Soviet Aircraft: Our plans are being co-ordinated with the Air Ministry through R.2. F.O. clearance has not so far been requested.

11/4

(e) Interpreters: Full agreement has been reached with the F.O. on the briefing of interpreters.

(f) Car Microphones: It has been decided to drop this operational method.

(g) Observation of Soviet Microphone Detection Methods: Responsibility for action accepted by M.I.5 (Liakhovsky)

(h) Use of R.O.S./1 as interpreter to ZAKHAROV: Cleared by you with F.O.A. and in detail by me with the F.O.

3. SO/V.C.S.S. has asked that V.C.S.S. should be informed on the clearance situation on his return on Friday.

APPENDIX III(b)

ACTION TAKEN

Friday R.O.S.
10.4.56

1. I have cleared 2(c) and 2(d) with F.O.A.

2. F.O.A. notes that if any telephone tapping is indulged in F.O. clearance will have to be obtained.

3. I will take these up with C.S.S. - but you should go ahead with the planning.

C.W.E. 10.4.

E.R.**SECRET**Sir N. Brook*Sir E.*

/ Bridges would be glad if you would deal with this, and sees no need for any further reference to him. He does not think that he is in possession of any knowledge not also possessed by you which is relevant to the solving of this particular problem.

Of course I am at your service; and should very much hope to be brought in if there were to be any idea of pursuing the suggestion that the Treasury should take an overt part.

*T. Admore,*16th May 1956



SECRET

15th May, 1956.

Dear Brook,

Crabb.

I mentioned to you and Kirkpatrick last evening the problem of who should deal with the sequelae of this incident, expressing the view that M.I.6 would have no machinery for handling the various problems and probably ought not to appear in them anyway; so that there seemed no alternative but for the Admiralty to deal with them. The kind of problems I have in mind are:-

- (a) Making to the Crabb estate or next-of-kin the payment for the job;
- (b) Any ex gratia payments that might arise (responsibility for any pension liability would rest with the Ministry of National Insurance and Pensions);
- (c) Action to establish formal presumption of death for legal purposes.

This latter is likely to have practical importance because there will be a share of royalties arising from the biography written by Mr. Pugh which will come into the estate.

I have discussed this with the First Lord and Parliamentary Secretary. Neither of them, nor I also for that matter, really want the Admiralty to be associated with this any more, and if we could find some other authority who could take the work off our shoulders without the risk of embarrassment, we should be only too pleased. In our talk the suggestion was made that perhaps the Treasury as an entirely independent body, who could not possibly be suspected of being privy to what had happened, and who were after all the central paymasters of the Government, might be a suitable department. I promised I would put this point to Bridges, which is the reason for sending him a copy of this letter.

The First Lord feels that there is a political factor to be taken into account. His point is that if the Admiralty undertake these functions we shall be identifying ourselves with the incident more than ever. He knows that many officers in the Navy are critical of what has happened as spoiling the good name of the Service and he is loath to add to their embarrassment by continuing to associate the Admiralty with the incident. If we do undertake these clearing up measures and they become known, the public impression would probably be that the Admiralty (though not the Ministers thereof) were associated with the Intelligence authorities in the operation. This admittedly to some extent marries up with the information that we gave to the Press when they commenced asking questions about Crabb, and will possibly serve in the public mind to reduce the extent to which we are believed to have told lies.

It would be implicit that if we undertake the clearing up work any questions in the House which may arise on our actions would have to be answered by the Parliamentary Secretary. We would hope that he will be able to confine himself to questions of fact relating to the particular clearing up problem and would be able to avoid any questions dealing with the operation itself by quoting the Prime Minister's announcement of 9th May.

Subject to any views which Kirkpatrick or Bridges may express, would you be good enough to tell the Prime Minister of the problem and take his directions over what should be done. If it would help I should be willing to come across to a meeting and answer questions.

Yours sincerely

J. Lang

The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook, G.C.B.

SECRET

E.R.

TOP SECRET

Notes of a talk with Sir I. Kirkpatrick and Mr. Pat Dean*(outside the enquiry)*

1. Sir I. Kirkpatrick definitely takes the view that if F.O.A. has not cleared the scheme, there is no Foreign Office Ministerial responsibility for it. When I asked him which Department was responsible, he was disposed to say that it should be "the suborning Department" but he and Mr. Dean agree that the point is not clearly laid down anywhere and that it ought to be.
2. Turning to Michael Williams, I noticed that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had been having an interview with Dean. They have seen Michael Williams' letter to me which is going to be despatched, and I shall have to hear evidence again.
3. Pat Dean has known him for 30 years and he is a protégé of his and I.K. says he is a bad witness.
4. When I put my case against him they admitted that the procedure about clearing cases was slack and did not dispute that the slack procedure had led to a certain slackness or even negligence in the handling of cases, a negligence which they think extends to both sides.
5. Apparently M.W. claims that Bruce-Lockhart discouraged him from looking at the detail of the case on the grounds that there was nothing there which concerned him.
6. Another point made is that according to ? Bruce-Lockhart and other witnesses the really safe cases are never cleared, but Bruce-Lockhart and Co., had been claiming that the frogman operation was quite safe. If so, why should it be cleared at all?
7. Pat Dean also claimed that Michael Williams never gave clearance to cases himself, but virtually always came to consult Pat Dean about them. He said he was much more careful and scrupulous than his predecessor and it would be quite out of character for him to approve an operation like the frogman operation on his own responsibility.

E.R.

8. Dean said that Michael Williams admitted quite early on that there had been some misunderstanding between him and Bruce Lockhart as to whether he had had an opportunity of looking at the frogman papers. But it seemed that he had never made it clear to the Foreign Office that M.I.6. claimed that he had cleared the operation.

9. If, as I gather, the letter from Michael Williams is received tomorrow morning, the first thing is to make sure that Bruce Lockhart has had a copy and, subject to this, they had both better be summoned to give evidence in the afternoon. Blast it!

E.E.D.
JM

15th May, 1956

SECRET



15th May, 1956. ✓

Dear Bridges,

I have looked into the problem which V.C.N.S. and I took away yesterday.

The list of intelligence operations proposed by the D.N.I. to the Board of Admiralty in September 1955 did not include a frogman operation. It would not therefore be right to say that the Board rejected such an operation on any ground before First Lord made to the Prime Minister the various proposals^{some of} which he eventually turned down: the Board never considered it.

There was however an earlier stage of preliminary discussion about possible projects which the Navy might undertake. At this time the list included a frogman operation. The list was considered at a departmental meeting (within Admiralty), presided over by the V.C.N.S. The meeting decided against the operation and Admiral Davis has some recollection that the primary reason was a reluctance to use Navy divers. I have been unable to trace any positive connection between this stage and M.I.6 developing an interest. Admiral Inglis was away and his deputy is not now in London. M.I.6 already had a general requisition for hull characteristics and may well have begun to think of the possibility of frogmen on their own; they might on the other hand have heard of the Admiralty's dropping of the idea and have felt that they could, in their own way, legitimately have a try.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Lang

The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B.,
G.C.V.O., M.C.

SECRET



Home Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

11th May, 1956.

TOP SECRET

My dear Bridges

The Home Secretary has received a minute from the Prime Minister informing him that you have been asked to hold an inquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation in Portsmouth Harbour on 19th April. The Prime Minister has asked the Home Secretary to ensure that members of the Home Office give you all the assistance you may need. As you know the Home Office had no connection with this matter at all. I have, however, asked the Chief Constable of Portsmouth to provide a report on the circumstances in which the police were asked to remove the page from the Hotel Register and I enclose a copy of the police report.

Yours sincerely

Frank Newsam

The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.,
M.C.

L.R.

CONFIDENTIALCOPY

From:- The Chief Constable,
P.O. Box No. 1,
Police Headquarters,
Queen's Crescent,
PORTSMOUTH.

To:- Sir Frank Newsam, KCB, KBE, CVO, MC,
Permanent Under Secretary of State,
Home Office, WHITEHALL.

10th May, 1956.

Forwarded for your information.

(SGD) H. C. WEST
Chief Constable.

Report of: Stanley Jack LAMPORT - Detective Superintendent.
SUBJECT: Commander L. K. P. CRABB, O.B.E., G.M.

Sir,

I beg to report with reference to the above named who has been missing since the 19th April, 1956, that the circumstances as known at this office are as follows:-

At the time of the arrival of the Russian ships in Portsmouth a

was in this City and had been granted facilities to use a police office in a sub-station.

About 11.30 a.m. on the 19th April, 1956, reported to me that one of his men had been diving and had failed to surface. The Chief Constable was informed and provisional arrangements were made for action to be taken should the body be found. called at this office on a number of occasions and acquainted the Chief Constable and myself of the progress made in informing the Admiralty and relatives of the missing man.

On the 21st April, 1956, informed us that the missing man was named Commander CRABB, that he had stayed at the Sally Port Hotel, Old Portsmouth, with another man named Bernard SMITH, and it was desirable if possible that these names and addresses should be removed from the hotel register. After discussion I went to the hotel where I saw the proprietor Mr. RICHMAN. I told him that a gentleman who had stayed at his hotel had been engaged in some secret naval

/exercise

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

E.R.
8

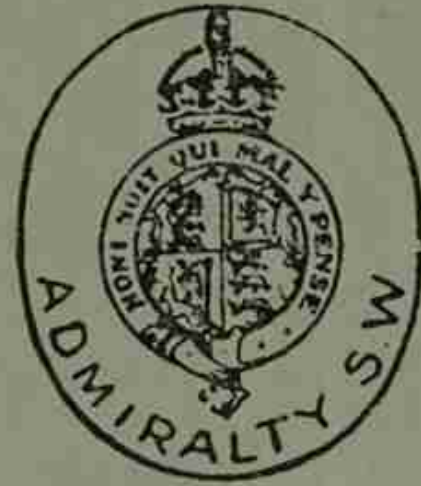
exercise and was missing and that it was desirable to ensure that particulars in his register should not become public. Mr. RICHMAN was very co-operative and after I had examined the register he consented to my suggestion that I should remove a double page, which I did. The pages in the register were not numbered and it was only by checking dates that it could be seen that a part was missing. I asked Mr. RICHMAN and his wife not to discuss the matter with anyone, and they agreed. No mention was made of the Official Secrets Act and no threats were made. The page was later handed by me to an officer of the Security Service and has since been returned to me and is now in my possession.

There was no reaction by the press until the 2nd May, 1956, when, during the afternoon, two men entered the hotel. RICHMAN did not suspect they were press men and asked them to sign the register. Immediately they turned back some pages and noted that some dates were missing. RICHMAN remonstrated with them and they then disclosed that they were Press representatives. During the next hour other press representatives entered the hotel and subjected RICHMAN to series of questions which to the best of his ability he tried to evade. Since this time the hotel has been almost solely occupied by press representatives and daily, RICHMAN, his wife and staff, have been pestered with questions.

Throughout the whole time I have maintained contact with RICHMAN, who has been only too willing to co-operate in any way possible.

(SGD) S. J. LAMPORT.

Detective Superintendent.



*With the Compliments of the
Private Secretary to the First Lord.*

TOP SECRETPRIME MINISTER

Thank you for your Top Secret Minute about the Bridges Enquiry. The Admiralty will certainly give any assistance for which we are asked.

2. You will probably think this a small point but, for the sake of accuracy, the date on which the operation was reported to Ministers was May 3rd not May 4th as your Minute says. I heard the news on the evening of May 3rd and I had Anthony Nutting - in the absence of the Foreign Secretary - also informed. We then asked for an interview with you which you gave us in the afternoon of May 4th.

CILCENNIN

10th May, 1956.
-----**TOP SECRET**

Top Secret.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick

Frogman.

I attach a copy of Sir N. Brook's informal enquiry into the facts of this matter. It seems to me to be fair, but it

(a) rather understates the part played by N. I. D. Officers in helping & taking part in the operation - (para. 2); &

(b) omits any account of the part played by Smith & others & of the various serious mistakes made by M.I. 6 in attempting this operation without providing any cover story.

2.

2. I am told by Sir N.
Brooke's private secretary that
Sir E. Bridges has been
charged by the P.M. to investigate
the whole story in more detail &
that he is beginning at once.
These other points will no doubt
be covered in Sir E. Bridges'
investigation.

P. D. Lam.
9. 4.

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL MINUTE

TOP SECRET

SERIAL No. M. 101/56.

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

I have asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on April 19.

The enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation,
- and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until May 4.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers of your Department give

- 2 -

Sir Edward Bridges all the assistance he may require
in carrying out this enquiry.

I have sent similar minutes to the Foreign
Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

A.E.

May 9, 1956.

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MINUTE

TOP SECRET

SERIAL No. M 102. / 56

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

I have asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crebb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on April 19.

The enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation,
- and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until May 4.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers of your Department give

- 2 -

Sir Edward Bridges all the assistance he may require
in carrying out this enquiry.

I have sent similar minutes to the Foreign
Secretary and the Home Secretary.

A.E

May 9. 1956.

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL MINUTE

TOP SECRET

SERIAL No.

M. 103 / 56

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

I have asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on April 19.

The enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation,
- and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until May 4.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers of your Department give Sir Edward Bridges all the assistance he may require

- 2 -

in carrying out this enquiry.

I have sent similar minutes to the First Lord of
the Admiralty and the Home Secretary.

A.E.

May 9, 1956.



10, Downing Street,
Whitehall,

TOP SECRET

SIR EDWARD BRIDGES

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MINUTE**

SERIAL No. M. 104/56.

I wish you to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on April 19.

Your enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation,
- and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until May 4.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

I have asked the Ministers in charge of the Departments concerned to give whatever instructions

- 2 -

are necessary to ensure that officers in their
Departments give you all the assistance you may
require in carrying out this enquiry.

HR
- -

May 9, 1956.

TOP SECRET

DRAFT of a Minute from the Prime Minister to:

Foreign Secretary
First Lord of the Admiralty
Home Secretary

I have asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on 19th April.

The enquiry should include the following points:-

- (a) what authority was given for the operation,
- and (b) why its failure was not reported to Ministers until 4th May.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers of your Department give Sir Edward Bridges all the assistance he may require in carrying out this enquiry.

MAY, 1956.

File

TOP SECRETPRIME MINISTER

I have discussed with Sir Edward Bridges, and with the Permanent Secretaries of the Foreign Office and Admiralty, the arrangements for the enquiry which is to be held in pursuance of the statement which you made in the House of Commons this afternoon.

In the light of those discussions I recommend that you should now send minutes, in the terms of the attached drafts, to Sir Edward Bridges and to the Ministers concerned.

NORMAN BROOK

9TH MAY, 1956.

TOP SECRET

DRAFT of a Minute from the Prime Minister to: Sir Edward Bridges

I wish you to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on 19th April.

Your enquiry should include the following points:-

(a) what authority was given for the
operation;

and (b) why its failure was not reported to
Ministers until 4th May.

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available I will consider, with the responsible Ministers, what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

I have asked the Ministers in charge of the Departments concerned to give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers in their Departments give you all the assistance you may require in carrying out this enquiry.

MAY, 1956.

E.R.

TOP SECRET

DRAFT of a Minute from the Prime Minister to:

Foreign Secretary
 First Lord of the Admiralty
 Home Secretary

I have asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out on my behalf an enquiry into the circumstances in which Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on 19th April.

~~The terms of reference which I have given for this~~
 enquiry are:-

"To ascertain -

- (i) by whose authority Commander Crabb undertook an intelligence operation against the Russian warships in Portsmouth harbour on 19th April;
- (ii) why this operation was undertaken without Ministerial authority [and in face of the Prime Minister's ruling that no operations of this kind should be undertaken during the visit of the Soviet leaders;]

and (iii) why the failure of the operation was not reported to Ministers until 4th May".

My object is to establish, by independent enquiry, what the facts are and where responsibility lies. When the report of this enquiry is available, ^{I will consider, with} the responsible Ministers, ~~will consider~~ what disciplinary action, if any, should be taken.

Please give whatever instructions are necessary to ensure that officers of your Department give Sir Edward Bridges all the assistance he may require in carrying out this enquiry.

MAY, 1956.

9th May, 1956.

TOP SECRET

I enclose, as promised, a copy (No 8).
of the factual report which I made to the Prime Minister
yesterday on the subject which we discussed this afternoon.

NORMAN BROOK

Sir John Lang, G.C.B.

TOP SECRETPRIME MINISTERCommander Crabb

I submit, as requested, a summary of the main facts so far as I have ascertained them.

This information was obtained in the course of informal enquiries directed primarily to the nature of the public statement to be made on behalf of the Government - though its accuracy has since been checked by C. and D.N.I. Before any disciplinary steps are taken, some more formal enquiry should be held if only (i) to establish the responsibility of individuals within the Departments concerned, and (ii) to give the individuals an opportunity to say anything they may have to say in their defence.

My first thought had been that a formal enquiry of this kind might be held by Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick and Sir John Lang. It is, however, arguable that each of them bears some share of responsibility for the fact that Ministers were not informed earlier of what had occurred. For this reason it would be preferable that the enquiry should be held by some independent person, e.g. the Treasury Solicitor.

If you agree, I will now ask Sir Edward Bridges to arrange for such an enquiry to be put in train. There is of course no question of any public enquiry. Both the proceedings and the report would be private.

I think it advisable that the enquiry should have been put in hand before the statement is made in the House of Commons to-morrow.

NORMAN BROOK

8TH MAY, 1956

The Prime Minister has minuted:

"I agree: so proceed"

A.E. May 8 "

JAB 9/5



Factial Report

Copies

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | } | Prime Minister |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | Sir Norman Brook |
| 4 | | Mr. P.H. Dean |
| 5 | | D.N.I., Admiralty |
| 6 | } | Sir Edward
Bridges |
| 7 | | |
| 8 | | Sir John Lang. |

E.R.

TOP SECRETCOPY NO. 6

One of the standing intelligence "requirements" notified to M.I.6 by the Admiralty is information about the under-water noise characteristics of Russian warships. This comes first in the list of priority Admiralty requirements, since the information is necessary for the effective offensive use of certain types of mine and torpedo. It is therefore a duty of M.I.6 to try to obtain this information for the Admiralty whenever opportunity offers.

2. Russian warships are rarely within range of our intelligence services; and, when they knew that a Russian cruiser was to bring M. Bulganin and M. Khrushchev to Portsmouth, M.I.6 decided to mount an operation against it to obtain this information. They engaged Commander Crabb to undertake the operation: he had previously undertaken one similar mission for them. The Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty (N.I.D.) were aware that M.I.6 intended to take this opportunity of trying to obtain this information. Foreign Office authority to undertake the operation was not obtained - though, owing to an internal misunderstanding, M.I.6 were under the impression that it had been cleared. In any event M.I.6 were confident that the operation would be completed without detection: it was a very simple matter and in their opinion (which was shared by N.I.D.) the risk of anything going wrong was negligible.

3. The Naval Intelligence Division of the Admiralty were anxious to carry out another intelligence operation against this Russian cruiser while it was in British waters, namely, to intercept from an aircraft any electronic transmissions from the cruiser. Their request for authority to do this was submitted to the Prime Minister by the First Lord of the Admiralty in a minute dated 6th April. This application was rejected by the Prime Minister on 12th April, who endorsed the First Lord's minute: "I am sorry, but we cannot do anything of this kind on this occasion".

E.R.

This decision, and the terms in which it was given, were communicated to the First Lord's Private Secretary on 12th April. They were made known to N.I.D., who were therefore aware that the Prime Minister had not only vetoed this particular operation but had given a general ruling that no intelligence action of this kind should be undertaken against the Russian cruiser. They did not, however, bring this ruling to the notice of M.I.6. They would assume that, for an operation to be conducted by M.I.6, political clearance would be sought by M.I.6 from the Foreign Office.

4. During the morning of Thursday, 19th April, M.I.6 received information in London that their operation had miscarried and that Commander Crabb had been drowned. N.I.D. were informed at the same time. This information was conveyed to the Foreign Office (Mr. P.H. Dean) by M.I.6 on the evening of 19th April. On Monday, 23rd April (after the "Chequers" week-end) Mr. Dean reported it to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick.

5. Meanwhile, from 19th April onwards there were daily meetings between officials of M.I.6., N.I.D. and M.I.5 - to establish what had become of Crabb and also to consider plausible cover stories.

On the evening of Saturday, 21st April, the Russian Admiral mentioned casually to the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, at a dinner, that a frogman had been sighted from the cruiser. He added that he did not want to make a fuss about this.

On Tuesday, 24th April, it was learned that Crabb's employer and friends were beginning to enquire about his whereabouts, mainly among naval officers; and it then became clear that the story was bound to find its way into the Press unless prompt action were taken to prevent this. It was thought to be specially important at this stage that publicity should be avoided while the Soviet leaders were in this country. M.I.6 and M.I.5 together reached the conclusion that the best way - possibly the only way - of securing this was to arrange for Crabb's relatives and friends to be informed officially, on behalf of the Admiralty, that he had disappeared while on some secret Admiralty work. This proposition was put to the Naval Intelligence Division on 24th April: they at first demurred: it was again put to them on 25th April when, after full

E.R.

consideration, the D.N.I. agreed to recommend to the V.C.N.S. that it was the only practicable way of preventing publicity. The V.C.N.S., after consultation with M.I.5 and M.I.6, accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, from 25th to 28th April, an R.N. officer sought out Crabb's relatives and friends and conveyed this information to them. The Soviet leaders left on Friday, 27th April. No mention of this affair was in fact made in any newspaper before Monday, 30th April.

6. The Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir John Lang, was first informed of the affair on 27th April. It had become necessary to seek his authority for the answers to be given to Press enquiries which were by then beginning to come in to the Admiralty. He decided not to inform the First Lord in the then state of the incident. Little appeared, however, in the newspapers on 30th April and 1st May. The story began to build up from Wednesday, 2nd May, onwards. On Thursday, 3rd May (Sir John Lang having meanwhile gone abroad on official business) the V.C.N.S. informed the First Lord of the Admiralty. On the same evening the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Nutting) was informed - the Foreign Secretary being in Paris for the meeting of the North Atlantic Council. On Friday, 4th May, the First Lord of the Admiralty and Mr. Nutting jointly informed the Prime Minister.



DEPARTMENT/SERIES CAB 301 PIECE/ITEM 120 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract/Item details: Note for the record by N Brook 8/5/56	
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.....*GRA 168*.....

PIECE/ITEM*49*.....

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TNA)

Final version.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I will make a statement on the subject raised by Question No. .

It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death.

still

While [it is the practice for] Ministers [to] accept responsibility I think it necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to make it clear that [the action was undertaken] without the authority or the knowledge of H.M. Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken.) instituted.

what was done
was done

the

the view of an ^{apocryphal} ~~proposition~~ of Ministerial responsibility

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I will make a statement on the subject raised by Question No. .

It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death.

While it is the practice for Ministers to accept responsibility I think it necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to make it clear that the action was undertaken without the authority or the knowledge of H.M. Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being instituted.

B.

Commander Crabb, who was an expert in shallow-water diving, was employed by the Admiralty to carry out an inspection of the Russian naval vessels in Portsmouth harbour. This is a procedure frequently followed by naval authorities when visiting warships are in port.

Commander Crabb did not return from this duty at the expected time and no trace of him has since been found.

His next-of-kin were informed as soon as they could be traced.

Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death whilst engaged on secret tests of underwater equipment.

The diver, who as stated in the Soviet note was observed from the Russian warships to be swimming between the Russian destroyers, was presumably Commander Crabb. His approach to the destroyers was completely unauthorised and Her Majesty's Government desire to express their regret at the incident.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I will make a statement on the subject raised by Question No. .

It would not be in the public interest to disclose the nature of the mission undertaken by Commander Crabb.

In the circumstances, however, it is my duty to add that it was undertaken without the authority or the knowledge of H.M. Ministers, and that appropriate (disciplinary) steps are being taken.

A

Commander Crabb, who was an expert in shallow water diving, was engaged by a branch of the Admiralty to carry out ~~a secret test~~ ^{a secret test} of ~~underwater equipment~~. He had been similarly engaged on previous occasions. It is not in the public interest to disclose the nature of these tests.

On the morning of 19th April while so engaged, he failed to reappear after a dive. His body has not been recovered. His next-of-kin were informed as soon as they could be traced.

J. Q. Is it likely that the body will be found?

R. No. The body would almost certainly have negative buoyancy and therefore not surface. It might well be carried long distances by currents.

K. Q. Why was the test not carried out by H.M.S. VERNON?

R. VERNON was not concerned with this type of test.

CAB 301/121.

*This implies that he was
not testing equipment.*

*All these are designed
to discredit the original
answer.*

A. Q. Why was Crabbe employed?

R. Although not on the active list, he was not only an expert on shallow water diving but also specially experienced in tests of the kind in question.

B. Q. What type of apparatus was Crabbe wearing?

R. The normal outfit for underwater swimming -
i.e. oxygen breathing apparatus
rubber diving dress
swim fins

C. Q. What endurance would the breathing set give him?

R. About one and a half hours.

D. Q. Are there any other limitations:

R. Yes. A depth of 33 feet must not be exceeded owing to risk of oxygen poisoning. For long distance swimming 25 feet must not be exceeded.

E. Q. How far can an underwater swimmer go in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours?

R. About 2 miles.

F. Q. Was Crabbe a good swimmer?

R. Not particularly. He might not have been able to cover more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

G. Q. What was the depth of water in the area?

R. At the time 40 feet to 80 feet.

H. Q. At what time did he enter the water and at what time was he expected to surface?

R. About 0700 and surface by 0830.

I. Q. What was the state of the sea and tide?

R. Calm and high water about 0700.

/(J)

CAB 301/121

SECRET

DEPUTY SECRETARY



7th May, 1956.

Dear Brook,

Herewith a copy of our proposed answers
to supplementaries.

They have not yet been seen by Ministers
or cleared with other interested parties outside
the Admiralty but I expect First Lord will bring
them with him tonight.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. J. Jamieson". Below the signature, the word "CHECKED" is stamped in red ink.

The Rt. Hon.
Sir Norman Brook, G.C.B.

SECRET

1. Can H.M.G. give a categorical assurance that these trials were not in any way connected with the Russian ships?

REPLY: Yes, Sir.

OR

The Admiralty instructions to Commander Crabbe contained nothing connected with the Russian ships.

OR, if the spokesman could hope to get away with it,

I am not prepared to enter into any detail as to the trials on which he was engaged.

2. Was the trial carried out at Stokes Bay?

REPLY: The Admiralty have already told the Press
that it was. The Bay is of course a
large area of water.

3. Who was with him; how many?

REPLY: It is not in the public interest to
disclose details.

But was anyone with him?

REPLY: Yes.

4(a) What efforts were made to rescue him, or search for the body?

REPLY: The nature of the trial was such that there was no hope of Crabbe's survival for any length of time after he was due to surface. The officer-in-charge carried out a search with the means immediately available to him.

(b) When was the C. in C. told and what action did he take?

REPLY: He was informed as soon as possible but by that time no hope of survival remained, and there was no action he could usefully take, even to search for the body.

/4(c)

-2-

(c) What precautions are normally taken in a trial of this nature and were they taken on this occasion?

REPLY: Normally two divers would be used and a safety boat would be in attendance.

X/ { I have already said that I cannot divulge
details of the trial on which C is
presumed to have lost his life.

Note: We suggest X/ simply because we can think of no answer which would not involve telling lies which might be exposed and which would be even slightly convincing.

5. Why were pages torn from the hotel register?

REPLY: On being informed that Commander Crabb was missing after a secret trial the local police on their own initiative removed the entry in the hotel register covering his stay. (If pressed) This action was perhaps ill-judged.

6(a) Did the Russians tell anyone they had seen a frogman? When? What action?

REPLY: A newspaper claimed last Friday to have been informed by an official at the Russian Embassy that a frogman had been seen by the Russian cruiser. This was 15 days after Commander Crabbe was missing by which time the information, even if confirmed, would have had no value.

(b) Could the frogman have been Crabbe?

REPLY: Assuming that what the Russian saw really was a frogman, it is unlikely to have been Crabbe; but it might possibly have been. We can only speculate on this possibility since we have no knowledge of Crabbe's movements after he dived.

● This one won't do,

7(a) Did Ministers know?

REPLY: This test was of a kind which takes place without specific Ministerial knowledge but naturally my noble friend accepts responsibility as he does for all Admiralty activity.

(b) On this occasion ought not Ministers to have been informed?

REPLY: Being wise after the event, perhaps it would have been advisable if those concerned had thought to tell Ministers, but they cannot be blamed. The considerations pointing to the desirability of informing Ministers on this particular occasion would be quite outside their normal concern.

11. Will there be an enquiry?

REPLY: Investigations went on for a long time
after Crabbe was missing and the
Admiralty are satisfied that there are no
further enquiries which would be useful.

8. Who is Mr. Smith?

REPLY: I have already said that it would not
be in the public interest to disclose the
personal details of those concerned in
the trial.

9(a) Is there any possibility that Crabbe was
"murdered" or captured by the Russians?

REPLY: I cannot believe in these possibilities.

(b) Why cannot H.M.G. believe in them?

REPLY: For one thing it was broad daylight and
the Russian ships were alongside in the
most crowded part of the harbour.

(c) Did the Russians have divers out at the time?

REPLY: Not so far as we know.

(d) Have any Russian authorities made representations
on the subject?

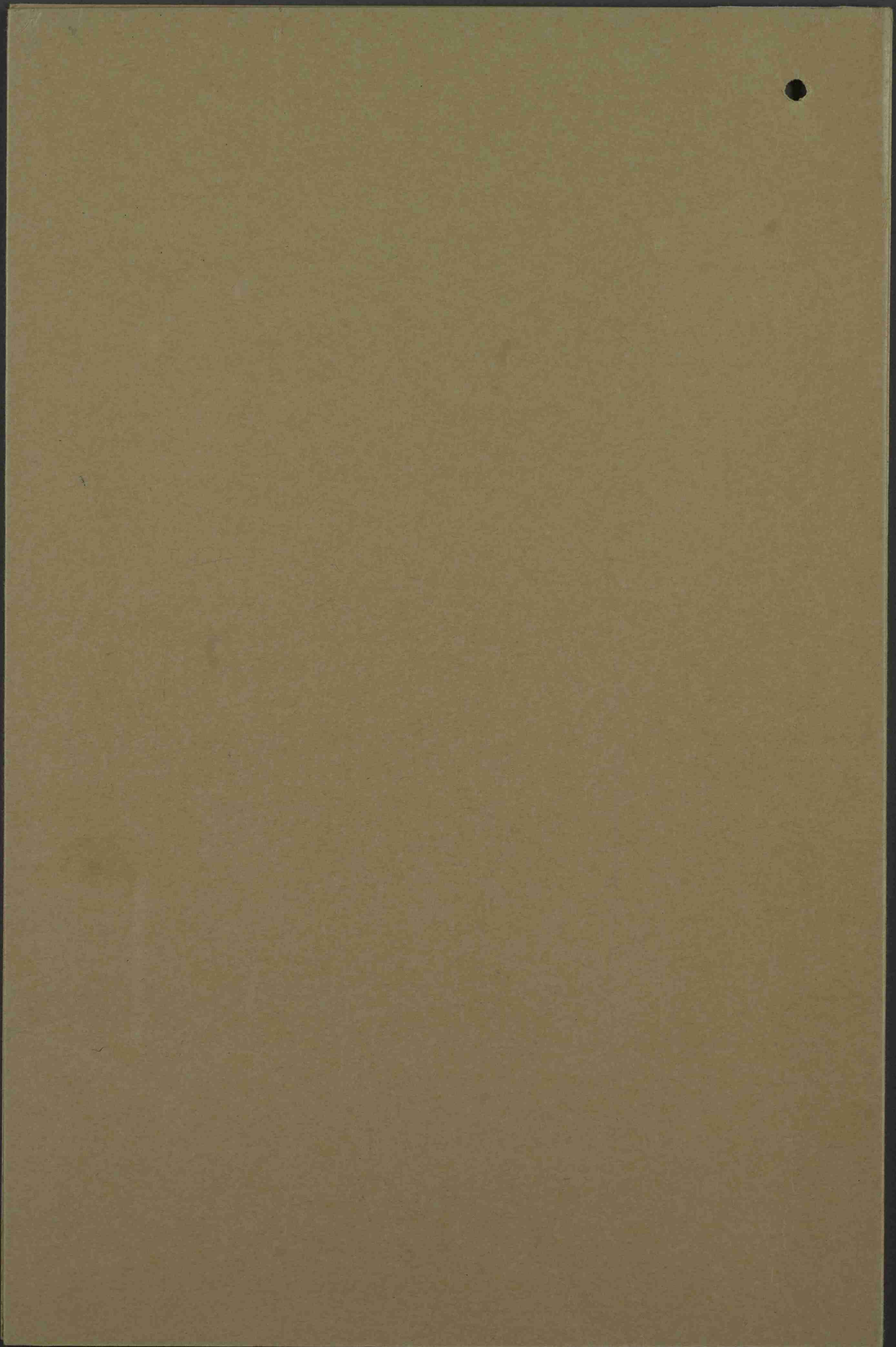
REPLY: No.

10.(a) How long was it before the next-of-kin were informed?

REPLY: Eight days, because it took some time to trace them.

(b) Why did the Admiralty not take the initiative and announce Commander Crabbe's disappearance?

REPLY: Except for casualties in action, it is not the practice of the Admiralty to take the initiative in these matters; but only to answer enquiries.



(2)

FROGMAN. The Bridges Enquiry into the
disappearance of Commander Crabbe. Draft summary
of evidence and correspondence with witnesses

CAB 301/122

FOREIGN OFFICE,
S.W.1.

May 17, 1956.

TOP SECRET

Dear Bligh,

Thank you for your letter of May 17, enclosing a draft note of the interview with Sir Edward Bridges yesterday afternoon.

2. I have no amendments to suggest.

*Yours sincerely
M.S. Williams*

(M.S. Williams)

T.J. Bligh, Esq., D.S.O., O.B.E.,
D.S.C.,
Treasury.

TOP SECRET

17th May 1956.

Dear *Bligh*

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of making alterations in the record.

2. I have only some minor alterations to suggest:

Page 1, sub para (a) last line.

Insert "generally" after "would". Mr. Williams has agreed this alteration.

Page 1, preceeding sub para (c).

Delete "both C.W.E. and F.O.A. agreed that" before para (c) and add to the end of para (c) "C.W.E. agreed that he himself had taken up about half a dozen operational clearances from his area with F.O.A. during the last year. Mr. Williams has agreed to this."

Page 3, last sentence.

Delete "given any hint" and substitute "told" five lines from the end.

Penultimate line insert "virtually" before "none".

Last line Insert "particularly" before "surprised"

*Yours sincerely
John Bruce [initials]*

D. Bligh, Esq.,
c/o Office of The Right Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, GCB, GCVO, MC.

SECRET

17th May, 1956,

Dear

Thank you for your letter addressed to Sir Edward Bridges of 15th May with suggested alterations to the minutes of Sir Edward Bridges' enquiry. These suggestions have all been recorded in the file copy of the minutes.

Sir Edward Bridges has asked me to say how grateful he is to have your fuller note, which has been put into the records.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) T. J. Blyth

Hollis, Esq.

TOP SECRET

17th May, 1956

Dear

I attach a draft note of the interview with Sir Edward Bridges yesterday afternoon. I should be grateful if you would let me know (via Sir Edward Bridges' Office) whether you would like any alterations made in the record.

We have inserted into the record copies the amendments you suggested to the minutes of previous interviews.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) T.J. Bligh

F.O.A.

C.W.E.



Treasury Chambers,
Great George Street,
S.W.1

✓
15th May, 1956

Received from Sir Edward Bridges'
office two enclosures. Please sign
and return immediately to
D.J. Mitchell, Room 121, Second Floor
Treasury, Gt. George Street, S.W.1.

.....*Edward*.....

Date*15.5.56*.....

TOP SECRET

AND PERSONAL

C/9545.

LONDON,

15th May, 1956.

Dear Bridge

Thank you for sending me a draft copy of your
summary of the evidence I gave.

I have some comments, which are attached.

Yours sincerely
C

The Right Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.

Meeting 10.30 a.m. Friday, 11th May.

✓ 1 (b) It was D.N.I. who tabled this information, although I stated that I had this in mind before the operation.

✓ 2 second sub-para I would prefer the words Foreign Office in the second line to be in inverted commas in that, to us clearance by F.O.A. involves Foreign Office clearance. This, in fact, is such an important point in the subsequent argument that perhaps it might be well to make it clear early.

A
✓ 2 third sub-paragraph As worded this is not, in fact, correct. I would prefer: "An officer (Minister, A.5. rank) from the Foreign Service is attached to "C"'s staff and his job is to look at possible operations referred to him and decide whether "Foreign Office" clearance is required and, if so, whether he can give it himself or refer it higher. When the senior S.I.S. officer took the papers to F.O.A. with instructions to so clear them with him, the former recorded in a minute to "C" that he had cleared a(c) and 2 (d) with F.O.A. He also stated that F.O.A. notes that if any telephone tapping is clearance indulged in F.O./will have to be obtained. When "C" read this minute he also knew that (a) had been referred by M.I.5. to the Foreign Office, who had raised no objection. (This went subsequently to the Prime Minister, who turned it down, but this was not at the time known by "C"). "C" also knew that (e) and (h) had been cleared in the Foreign Office and that his Deputy had ruled out (f); responsibility for (g) lay with M.I.5."

2 fourth sub-para I suggest that this is not now necessary if you accept the above amendment to sub-para 3.

- 2 -

✓ 2 fifth sub-para, last sentence I would prefer the following wording: "But at the same time it was important to limit F.O.A. responsibility to assessing political risk and not responsibility for the whole operation".

✓ 2 sixth sub-para, last sentence Again, with the same thought in mind, I would prefer the following wording: "But "C" thought that nothing in these arrangements could detract from his own responsibility for the operation as a whole, provided that he had - as he understood - received "Foreign Office" clearance."

✓ 2 7th sub-para I would like, at the end, the following words to be added: "Although it gave certain assistance to the operation".

✓ 5 top of last page In fact, there was one cheque and not more than one.

Meeting 3.30 p.m., Friday, 11th May

✓ Second sub-para, second sentence For the reason already given, I would prefer the words, in lines 4 and 5, to be "finalised "Foreign Office" clearance would have to be obtained".

✓ Second sub-para, last sentence I would prefer the wording: "When C.W.E. reported that clearance had been obtained, the operation was automatically put in train. "C" had previously warned the responsible officer that the operations it was intended to carry out in Portsmouth were extremely delicate".

✓ Top of page 4, under (b) Two separate operations are here referred to - i.e. "the armour measurement project" and "CLARET".

✓ Last page, under (e) What I understood was that the decision whether or not to tell the Foreign Secretary rested with Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, and also that Sir Ivone would take parallel action with the Admiralty.

Meeting 4.0 p.m., Monday, 14th May

✓ Sub-para 2, penultimate line This should read: "Later
the papers were discussed with F.O.A. and he saw them, and
again much later they were sent to him for comment".

┌
B └ Last sub-para, last sentence I would prefer this to
read as follows: "M.I.6. had to carry out very many
risky operations, balancing value against risk and against
political embarrassment. He regarded it as his job, and
that of his subordinates, to balance these factors, but to
obtain political clearance where the risk of political
embarrassment appeared great." └

Summary of evidence

✓ D.N.I. telephoned this afternoon. He had no comments on the summary of evidence for the occasions on which he attended except that, in the light of a letter coming from Sir J. Lang about the October, 1955, operation, certain connections would be needed to D.N.I.'s account of the way in which the use of naval divers was rejected on that occasion.

✓ D.N.I. also suggested that a more suitable word than "sentimental" might be found to describe the value of a search after Coale's disappearance.

W.D.
15/5.

TOP SECRET

Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

May 15, 1956.

Dear Bridges,

Thank you for letting me see in draft the summary of the evidence which I gave to you in connection with the enquiry into the frogman incident.

I should like to suggest the following amendments to this draft:

Page 1, sub-paragraph (b), second sentence.

Could this perhaps read as follows:

✓ "The F.O.A. saw or heard of a very large number of operations. If he saw any objection to any operation submitted to him for approval or foresaw any difficulty or was in doubt etc."

Page 2, lines 5 and 6.

May I suggest the insertion between "country" and "responsibility" of the following:

✓ "had been carried out in pursuance of an Admiralty requirement and without the knowledge of the Foreign Office".

Page 2, 2nd paragraph, first sentence.

I should prefer this to read:

✓ "In further discussion Mr. Dean agreed that if it was the case that the Foreign Office had approved the plans for the operation, in his view it then became their responsibility, but he added that he did not know whether Sir I. Kirkpatrick would agree with this view."

Page 3, last paragraph, lines 6 and 7.

✓ Add after "in the Foreign Office" the words "and in the Departments concerned".

Yours Sincerely
Patrick Dean.
(P. Dean)

Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

May 15, 1956.

TOP SECRET*Dear Bridges,*

Thank you for letting me see the draft summary of evidence of my two hearings on May 14.

2. I have certain amendments to suggest to the draft record of the 10.30 meeting, which are as follows:-

✓ Page 2, centre paragraph, third sentence should begin "He understood".

✓ Sixth sentence should end "he had himself given clearance for the attachment of an interpreter to General Zakharov."

✓ Seventh sentence should conclude "This lack of discussion would suggest that he, F.O.A., was unaware that he was being asked to approve the proposed operations, since he always went into such matters in great detail."

X Final sentence. I would like to suggest that this sentence should read "His clearance on these points was not asked." and that the rest should be omitted.

✓ Last page, first sentence. I do not think I was asked about the operations against our ships in Leningrad. In fact after the frogman incident "C" provided me with an account of these operations which as subsequently sent to the Prime Minister.

✓ Final paragraph, penultimate sentence might end "the Admiralty were providing cover."

✓ 3. I have no comment on the record of the afternoon meeting.

4. I return herewith the drafts of the two records.

*Yours sincerely,
M.S. Williams*

(M.S. Williams)

Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY.

TOP SECRETAND PERSONAL

LONDON,

15th May, 1956.

Dear Sir Edward.

Thank you for the opportunity to make amendments to the draft of my summary of evidence. I would like to make the following amendments:

- ✓ 1. Page 1, para 2. Before last sentence insert "he was not responsible for operations in the U.K., but the responsibility"
- ✓ 2. Page 2, last para., line 3. Insert the word "preliminary" before "papers".
- ✓ 3. Page 2 last sentence. Inset after "clearances" "he told R.O.A. there were further details of the operations attached to the minute and he asked him ..."
- ✓ 4. Page 3 para. 2. Insert after "had" "given F.O.A. for opportunity of asking any questions he wanted to and had obtained" *etc.*
- ✓ 5. Page 3 top line. Delete "asked for a" and insert "used the word".
- ✓ 6. Page 3 second sentence. Insert "detailed" before "nature".

Yours sincerely
T.M. Bruce (at hand)

The Right Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.



TOP SECRET.

Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

May 15, 1956.

My dear Bridges,

--- I return herewith the summary of my evidence with a couple of suggested amendments.

And whilst I am writing to you I think I should mention that an episode occurred yesterday which reinforces my view that a change should be made in the machinery and that the department which suborns M.I.6 must satisfy themselves that the operation has been cleared with the Foreign Office.

At a meeting of Ministers, which took place immediately after I left you the First Lord of the Admiralty said that a proposal to put a diver under the Sverdlov had come up before the Board of Admiralty and that the Board had decisively rejected it. The implication of this statement was that the operation against the Sverdlov took place in defiance of the expressed wishes of the Admiralty. But on that occasion the Foreign Office was admittedly not consulted. So who is responsible? Surely not the Foreign Office who are not allowed to know about the affair; and presumably not the Admiralty who state that they categorically repudiate the whole thing.

The conclusion is inescapable that the state of affairs which can put us in this position is unsatisfactory.

Yours ever,

John Philpotts

The Right Honourable
Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.



BOX No. 500,
PARLIAMENT STREET B.O.,
LONDON, S.W.1.

TOP SECRET & PERSONAL.

D.G.

15th May 1956.

Dear Bridges.

Bligh was good enough to send me a copy of his draft summary of my evidence, and to ask if I had any amendments to suggest. He also asked that I should send any note to you direct.

I have a number of amendments, mostly of minor importance, and I have reproduced Bligh's draft with my alterations underlined in red. May I make brief comments on the more important changes?

Paragraph 4.

✓ Bligh's draft suggests that we, and perhaps the police, were to some extent concerned in inventing the cover story. The Police were in no way concerned: we only to the extent of advocating that there should be one.

Paragraph 6.

✓ We mentioned the possibility of giving help to Service Directors of Intelligence, but I think dismissed this on the basis that they would need no help in overt operations and would call in M.I.6 for covert operations. I have therefore suggested that the last four lines should be deleted.

Paragraph 8.

✓ In Bligh's draft there is, I think, an implied criticism that I did not see Dean until 23rd April. In fact I had no duty to see Dean and only spoke to him because he was the only civil servant who, to my knowledge, knew of the operation at that time. If I was at fault, it was in not telling the Home Office until 3rd May. You will remember that I explained my reasons for this.

✓ Bligh's draft deals very briefly with my evidence and no doubt it is quite full enough for your report to the Prime Minister. On my return from seeing you, I made a note which sets out the argument more fully, and I attach a copy of this in case you should find it useful for the record.

Yours sincerely,

Rose Holt.

Rt.Hon.Sir Edward Bridges,
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
Treasury Chambers,
Great George Street, S.W.1.

Encs.

TOP SECRET.

DRAFT.

Mr. Hollis attended at 12.15 p.m. He explained that so far as M.I.5 were concerned, they normally went to the Home Secretary to get Ministerial cover. But wherever they were concerned with Diplomatic people they always cleared their proposals with Mr. Dean at the Foreign Office as well.

They had a clear arrangement with M.I.6 that if the latter were to mount an operation in this country they should keep M.I.5 informed. This would enable M.I.5 to tell the Chief Constable of the area concerned, giving him such details as might be necessary, depending on whether the operation were to be in a civil or in a military area. This procedure was followed in the Crabb case.

On the particular occasion in question both M.I.6 and the Foreign Office knew that the Claridges Operation, which was an M.I.5 responsibility, was turned down. This suggested that the system was working all right.

Mr. Hollis explained that M.I.5 were not (omit 'really') involved in planning or directing the operation. They simply acted as link with the Chief Constable of Portsmouth.

He thought there would be some advantage in both M.I.5 and M.I.6 getting together more fully on operations which M.I.6 were planning in this country. In view of the increasing difficulties of gleaning intelligence from other countries, there might well be a growing number of such operations taking place. He thought that M.I.5, who had much greater experience of working with the law enforcement agencies in this country, would be able to help M.I.6 on certain problems.

/Sir...

TOP SECRET.

- 2 -

✓ Sir Dick White, who would be taking over on 1st July, already had great knowledge and experience of handling difficult operations in the U.K. and would, he felt sure, be interested in discussing developments on these lines. (Omit following 4 lines "It was also possible London Airport etc)").

✓ Mr. Hollis referred to the part which the press had played in the frogman episode and said how this showed that the chief risk against which one had to plan in mounting clandestine operations in this country was not the enemy or the object of the intelligence, but the British press.

✓ M.I.5, who had introduced Mr. D. to the Chief Constable at Portsmouth on 16th April, learned at midday on 19th April that the frogman had not re-appeared. Hollis saw Mr. Dean of the Foreign Office on 23rd April, but he did not tell the Home Office until 3rd May. He took the view that both M.I.5 and the Home Office were only on the fringes of this business.

TOP SECRET.Note.

I saw Sir Edward Bridges this morning. Mr. Bligh, Treasury, and Mr. Derracott, Cabinet Office, were also present.

2. Bridges said he had been instructed by the Prime Minister to make an enquiry into the CRABB case, and to see whether Ministers were adequately aware of the activities of the intelligence organisations.

3. He first asked me what were the arrangements under which the Security Service obtained Ministerial authority for its actions. I said the main field in which we required such authority was that of the interception of communications. We obtained authority for telephone and letter checks from the Home Secretary under a Home Office Warrant. If the subject of the check were a foreign diplomat, we also cleared the project with the Foreign Office, and in answer to a question from Bridges I said that the official concerned was Mr. Dean. After this we notified the Home Office that Foreign Office approval had been obtained. In addition to letter and telephone interception, we also had microphone operations, and in these we used our own discretion as to whether we obtained Ministerial authority.

If there were a serious risk of embarrassment we should clear the operation in advance, but there were occasions when we had the opportunity to cover, for example, a Communist Party meeting, when we should certainly proceed on our own initiative. Bridges said he fully agreed that we were justified in doing so.

4. Bridges then said he was concerned lest a Ministerial ruling obtained by one intelligence department was not necessarily made known to other departments who might be planning intelligence operations. I said in the case of BULGANIN and KHRUSHCHEV we had been directly concerned in one operation - a microphone operation at Claridges - which, as Bridges knew, had been put by the Home Secretary to the Prime Minister and turned down. This was known to M.I.6 and the Foreign Office because they had in the first instance proposed it, and I had told them the Prime Minister's decision. I then explained the difference between the security intelligence operation run by us and the straight intelligence operation run by M.I.6, and told him of the procedure arranged in the Strang/Newsam agreement. Bridges said he was concerned lest one of the Service Departments might go ahead with operations in ignorance of the fact that a Ministerial ruling had been obtained. I said I could not speak positively on this point, but I thought it likely that the Services would turn to M.I.6 if they wanted a clandestine operation carried out in this country, and that M.I.6 would be likely to know of any Ministerial ruling. Probably, however, this would not apply to more or less overt operations, and I added that I imagined the Air Ministry had made full arrangements to photograph and get all possible technical details of the Russian planes which came in to London Airport. I saw little likelihood of embarrassment in this. Bridges agreed with this and thought that the only risk of embarrassment was in clandestine operations such as the CRABB case.

5. He then asked me what function the Security Service had performed in the CRABB case. I said we had informed the Chief Constable of Portsmouth that Commander Davis of M.I.6 would be

/in...

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

TOP SECRET.

- 2 -

in his area and would call on him to explain his business, and we had asked the Chief Constable to give him such assistance as he might require. This was our regular drill when M.I.6 was concerned in an operation within a Chief Constable's area. Later, when we heard that the register of the Sallyport Hotel had been signed by CRABB and SMITH with their own names and addresses, I had sent an officer down to Portsmouth to discuss with the police and with M.I.6 what could be done, though in fact the Portsmouth police had taken the action of removing the pages before my officer arrived. Apart from this, we had shared in the many inter-departmental discussions which had taken place.

6. Bridges said he was satisfied that the CRABB operation was a thoroughly bad and unplanned one. No serious steps seemed to have been taken to conceal the movements of the participants or to plan any cover story. He asked for my comments. I said I had little doubt that there were many differences between the planning of operations in foreign countries and in the U.K., and we probably had more experience than M.I.6 in the latter field. I thought there would be some advantage in having a security officer with U.K. experience for M.I.6 operations in this country, but I spoke without any detailed knowledge of the present M.I.6 set up for handling these matters. I said I had little doubt that there were good opportunities for obtaining intelligence in this country and I thought these should not be neglected, particularly as I understood that M.I.6's operations overseas were becoming ever more difficult. I reminded Bridges that Sir Dick White would be in charge of M.I.6 in another 6 weeks. I said there was no man in this country with as good a knowledge and experience of handling delicate operations in the U.K., and I urged Bridges very strongly not to reach a decision as to the control or limitation of M.I.6 operations until White had had an opportunity to examine the problem and discuss it with me. Bridges said he thought this was an excellent proposal.

7. Bridges then returned to the question of informing Ministers. He asked me at what stage, if any, I had considered informing the Home Secretary. I said I had spoken to Mr. Dean on 23rd April telling him that I was considering whether I should inform the Home Office because of the fact that we had brought in the Portsmouth Police. I did not actually inform Newsam until 3rd May, when we knew that the press had got hold of the story about the Sallyport Hotel register. Bridges asked why I had delayed so long. I said that neither the Home Office nor ourselves were very closely involved as principals. Bridges said he understood this.

8. Finally Bridges asked me whether I had anything I wanted to say. I said I had nothing further to contribute which I thought would be of any practical value, but I did think we had to have in mind the difficulties presented to us by the press. I thought there must be many instances in which we would be able to conduct operations against the Russians without being detected by them, but which the press might well stumble upon and 'blow'. It was a pity that we could not somehow get the co-operation of the press who were no doubt basically patriotic. Even in the frogman case, if CRABB had completed his operation successfully and was still alive, I thought there was a very strong likelihood that there would still have been a press sensation, for undoubtedly many people knew something of the operation. Bridges said he doubted whether anything could be done with the press as a whole. As regards the CRABB case, he commented that undoubtedly I was right that a number of people knew about it. He thought CRABB was not the sort of person who ought to have been used as an agent.

14.5.56.



SECRET

15th May, 1956.

Dear Bridges,

Bligh asked that I would write to you about his summary of the evidence which V.C.N.S. and I gave you yesterday. I return the document with a few amendments only one of which seems to call for explanation - paragraph 7.

In the light of my other letter of today, about the October/55 operation, I doubt whether the last seven lines are wanted. If you feel that something should be said on this subject, we certainly could not object, but in that case, the alternative wording I have suggested seems appropriate.

*Yours sincerely,**B. Lang*

The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B.,
G.C.V.O., M.C.

SECRET

TOP SECRET

LONDON S.W.1.

15th May, 1956.

Dear Sir Edward,

It was very kind of you to let me have a copy of the Draft Summary of Evidence which we gave yesterday, concerning S. and myself.

We have no comment.

Yours sincerely,

E. Davis

Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.

TOP SECRET

15th May, ;956

Dear

I attach a draft summary of the evidence which you gave to Sir Edward Bridges in connection with the enquiry which he has recently been holding. He had it in mind to attach this summary to the report he is making to the Prime Minister. I should be grateful if you would let me know by this evening if possible if you have any amendments which you wish to have made to the draft. It would be a convenience if you would address any note to Sir Edward Bridges direct.

Yours sincerely,

Sir John G Lang, G.C.B.

Director of Naval Intelligence

Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, GCMG, KCB

P.H. ~~Sir Maurice~~ Dean, KCMG, CB

C

D.& S.

F.O.A.

C.W.E.

Hollis

CAPS

Summary of Evidence

(H1)

DRAFT

Sir Edward Bridges held the first meeting of his enquiry, carried out under Prime Minister's minute of 9th May, at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 11th May.

Messrs. Bligh and Darracott were in attendance as Secretaries.

"C" and D.N.I. were the first to attend *W.C.* and made a long and detailed report ~~and~~ the following is a resume of the important points.

1. The Inception of the Operation

(a) The visits of Soviet warships to West

European ports presented a rare opportunity for intelligence procurement. "C" thought it would be difficult to overstress the importance which was attached in Intelligence circles to the visit of the Russian ships.

(b) When H.M. ships had visited Leningrad they had

been subjected to a pretty thorough scrutiny by the Russians who had used a number of methods of gleaning information. In particular, when the ships had requested that a stern buoy be laid for one of the destroyers the Russians had sent three times as many divers as were necessary to moor the buoy. It seemed beyond reasonable doubt that some of these divers had taken the opportunity for under water examination of British ships (see extract from D.N.I. report).

2. Clearance for the Operation

A number of possible operations for the B. and K. visit had been examined. These included:

- (a) Microphones in Claridges
- (b) Telephone tapping
- (c) Warships
- (d) Soviet aircraft
- (e) Briefing the interpreters
- (f) Car microphones
- (g) Soviet detection methods
- (h) Use of agent as interpreter.

It was accepted that all these operations would need Foreign Office clearance. This is not uncommon and there ^{are} special arrangements in force to enable this to be done conveniently and quickly.

An officer from the Foreign Service is attached to "C"s staff and his job is to look at possible operations referred to him and comment on them politically. ^(Foreign Office Adviser) Thus, the F.O.A. had specifically approved (b) - which was not subsequently put up for authority - and (e). The F.O.A. had not been asked about (a) because he knew that the Foreign Office had raised no objection to it, when ^{ack} approved by M.I.5 but that it subsequently went to the Prime Minister (channel unknown) who turned it down.

The F.O.A. had been shown a minute which included all the possibilities mentioned above (~~copy attached~~). He had specifically referred to (b) and (e) and had raised no

/objection

Which, in the case of the M.I.6. operations ~~was not~~ entailed reference to the Foreign Office Adviser.

Insert [A]
from attached
minute.

Not to this
draft
w/s.

objection to the rest. M.I.6 had therefore concluded that there were no Foreign Office objections to (c) and (d).

Sir Edward Bridges asked about the clearance of operations with the Foreign Office. "C" said that the normal channel of approach to the Foreign Office was through the F.O.A. who was a political watchdog. But at the same time it was important not to ^{write} ~~lay~~ overriding ~~responsibility for the operation to~~ ~~importance on the role of the F.O.A.~~

His job was to look at all the possible operations referred to him and to comment on them from the political angle. For example, he might consider that such-and-such was rather tricky and should be put up to higher authority, or that such-and-such was bad and should be ruled out. In the former case he would consult the Foreign Office; "C" would expect to be brought in as any projects so referred which were likely to go to the Permanent Under Secretary level. In the latter case, the matter was then referred by M.I.6 to "C" himself and if he thought it should be pressed he would take it up with Sir I. Kirkpatrick. Thus, it might be argued that as the F.O.A. had raised no objection on the B. and K. proposal M.I.6 could feel that they had technically got Foreign Office clearance. But "C" thought that nothing in these arrangements could detract from his own responsibility ^{in the operation as a whole provided} ~~to satisfy himself~~ that he had — ^{received "Foreign Office" clearance} ~~all the political cover necessary.~~

in the understanding -

For the purpose of record it could be noted that at this stage the Admiralty was a client and not an operating agent, although it gave certain assistance to the operation.

3. Diary of Events

"C" and D.N.I. explained what had taken place between April 17th and May 9th and the substance of their remarks is contained in the Factual Narrative attached. This explanation necessarily took some time.

4. The Hotel Register

The decision to tear the page out of the hotel register was discussed. The instructions to Mr. D. were that he should consult the Chief Constable at Portsmouth and report back to Headquarters to convey the views of the local authorities. No authority was given to the local authorities to act as they thought fit. They were merely asked to advise, but they did, in the event, regard themselves as under authority to act as they thought fit.

5. Errors in "Trade Craft"

"C" drew attention to a number of errors which had been made which all led towards "attributability" in the event of things going wrong. The object of an operation of this sort should be to achieve complete "unattributability". If the operation had been carried out in the same way as with the visit of the Sverdlov in October, 1955, then Commander Crabb's disappearance would have been a complete mystery; nobody would have known what had happened to him. But as it was Commander Crabb would seem to have told his partner that he was going to Portsmouth and that he was going with Mr. S. Commander Crabb should not have called in at Vernon nor should he have wandered about Portsmouth after the trial run. Mr. S., who was known by his friends and relatives to be a temporary Foreign Office official, should not have signed his ^{real name} ~~name~~ and address in the

/hotel

(i.e. the connection
of the operation
with an official
organisation)

hotel register; Mr. S. should certainly not have ~~been~~
^{written a}~~writing~~ cheques to Commander Crabb; and, finally, the
arrangements for providing canvas should have been
better. Moreover, no thought would appear to have
been given to providing a cover plan for use if
things went wrong. If things had gone properly there
would have been no need for a cover story of any other
story.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 p.m., to be
resumed at 3.30 p.m.

TOP SECRET~~DRAFT~~

When the meeting resumed at 3.30 p.m. 'C' said that he wished to make it clear that the F.O.A. was given the opportunity to study the details of the projected operations but did not avail himself of it.

Sir Edward Bridges asked who had finally authorised the forgerman operation. 'C' said that it had all along been realised that when the list of operations had been finalised ~~the~~ "Foreign Office ^{clearance} would have to be ^{obtained} informed. It was taken for granted that once Foreign Office clearance had been obtained everything could go ahead. Both 'C' and V.C.S.S. knew how the technical preparations were developing and that clearance was being sought. When C.W.E. reported that clearance had been obtained ^{no} ~~specific action was taken.~~

D.N.I. then made a general statement as follows.

The Admiralty have an important requirement for information on the underwater noise character^{istics} of Russian ships. This requirement dated December, 1954, had been circulated to all Intelligence Agencies to do what they could to meet it. There was a tacit understanding that N.I.D. would look to S.I.S. to undertake those clandestine operations which the Navy could not do for fear of embarrassment if they were discovered. Before the Russian Naval visit to Portsmouth in October, 1955, D.N.I. had submitted verbally ^{to V.C.N.S.} plans for special operations on that occasion. ~~The~~ ^{who} Board of Admiralty had rejected the mounting of operations by Naval divers ~~and N.I.D.~~

/therefore

The operation was automatically put in train. 'C' had previously warned the responsible officer that the operations it was intended to carry out in Portsmouth were extremely delicate.

^{subsequently}
~~therefore asked~~ S.I.S. ~~to undertake~~ the operation. It was successful and valuable information was obtained.

Before the April visit it was agreed that in dividing the projected operations between N.I.D. and S.I.S., N.I.D. would seek to undertake (a) an electronic intercept from an aircraft, (CLARET) and (b) an armour measurement and S.I.S. (c) the frogman operation. D.N.I. proceeded to seek Board approval for the Naval operations. The armour measurement project was rejected by the First Lord; N.I.D. subsequently asked S.I.S. to take over the project and attempt it in foreign waters. The request for authority for CLARET was submitted to the Prime Minister by the First Lord on 6th April but was rejected by the Prime Minister on 12th April.

D.N.I. stated that he never enquired how and when S.I.S. obtained clearance for their operations. He did not think it his affair. He had always regarded S.I.S. activities as governed by a different standard of values, with entirely different penalties if caught out.

It was not N.I.D.'s practice to enquire into the details of S.I.S. operations but if asked for assistance they would always help where they could. In the present instance N.I.D. had given a naval officer's name, as that of an experienced diver, on the understanding that S.I.S. would make the approach to him. N.I.D. had also helped by providing passes to the dockyard.

The understanding was that any operations which were carried out by S.I.S. would not be attributable to the Navy e.g. instructions had
 /been

been given that the naval officer was not to dive.

Commander Crabb's first dive was abortive. N.I.D.'s representative was so informed and that a further attempt would be made the following morning. He was not asked for any more help and Mr. S. appeared satisfied with the position. When Commander Crabb failed to return the N.I.D. representative arranged for a boat to be provided for a search. The naval officer was told to go back to Vernon and disassociate himself from further activity. The N.I.D. representative told S.I.S. that a full search with all available facilities could be arranged but advised against it since it would reveal the whole story without there being any hope of saving Commander Crabb.

In reply to a question by 'C', D.N.I. agreed that bearing in mind the kit which Commander Crabb had been using there would have been no practical, ~~only a small chance~~, in such a search.

In discussion, the following points were made:-

- (a) Board of Admiralty approval was necessary for operations such as those assigned to N.I.D. on this occasion. If the First Lord agreed, he made a submission to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. It was D.N.I.'s practice to inform Mr. Dean beforehand so that the proposal could be put up simultaneously in both departments. There were perhaps half a dozen cases a year in which clearance at such high level was necessary.

(b) The armour measurement project ^{and CLARET} ~~was~~ ^{will} submitted separately. When the First Lord rejected ^{the former} ~~it~~ N.I.D. asked S.I.S. to do it abroad if they could. The Prime Minister's rejection of CLARET was notified to D.N.I. who told his staff. The ruling was not passed to S.I.S. It was considered unnecessary to do so as they were regarded as working to entirely different standards. N.I.D. generally were reluctant to enquire too deeply into the codes and methods of S.I.S.

(c) With the qualification that there was always a greater risk under water in the event of a faint or a heart attack, the operation was as simple and as easy to carry out without fear of detection as could be wished. D.N.I. agreed that ~~in~~ discussion prior to the operation the view was expressed by the Admiralty that it was a reasonable and safe one to attempt.

Sir Edward Bridges then reviewed the circumstances in which the Admiralty were brought in after the failure of the operation and the following points were made:-

(a) D.N.I. agreed on the 25th April to make a recommendation to V.C.N.S., that the Admiralty should assume responsibility in order to avoid risk of disclosure while the Russian Ministers were in the United Kingdom. This was the prime objective of everyone concerned

/st.

at that time. D.N.I. considered that it was the Admiralty's job not so much to cover the story when it broke as to cover things to prevent it breaking though he realised that if it did break the Admiralty would have to deal with it.

(b) Neither D.N.I. nor 'C' thought the story would grow in the way it had. 'C' had felt that if the Admiralty could bring pressure to bear on any newspaper making enquiries it might damp the affair down. S.I.S. and the Foreign Office were obviously precluded from taking any action themselves.

(c) By the 25th April it became obvious that very speedy action was essential to stop the story breaking. This time factor probably influenced D.N.I. and V.C.N.S. to take action forthwith without reference to higher authority. For the next two days the press were quiet and D.N.I. saw no reason to report the matter higher than V.C.N.S. At this time there was perhaps a general concern not to add to Ministers' worries at a critical time. It also happened that there was a further two days press silence after the Secretary of the Admiralty was informed on 27th April.

(d) D.N.I. emphasised that the agreement of the Admiralty to provide cover did not in his view imply that the Admiralty were carrying full

/responsibility

responsibility for the situation and that it was up to them to tell Ministers. He had regarded this as a Foreign Office responsibility.

(e) 'C' agreed that for his part he had regarded the ^{decision} ~~prime responsibility~~ for telling the Foreign Secretary as resting ^{with} ~~on~~ Sir I. Kirkpatrick; the latter having been informed 'C' felt that his main concern was to keep the story from the press as long as he could.

(f) The action taken by the Admiralty succeeded in preventing the matter from breaking wild until 3rd May.

'C' and D.N.I. then withdrew at 4.45 p.m.

TOP SECRETDRAFT

Mr. Dean attended at 5 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges enquired about the system by which S.I.S. obtained Foreign Office clearance for their operations.

Mr. Dean explained that there were two ways in which S.I.S. obtained political clearance when this was necessary:-

(a) In certain highly secret cases 'C' went direct to Sir I. Kirkpatrick. He would normally inform Mr. Dean that he was doing so. Such instances were rare, perhaps not as many as half a dozen a year, and were always put orally.

(b) In other cases Foreign Office clearance was obtained through the F.O.A., who had discretion to agree or to reject S.I.S. proposals. The F.O.A. saw or heard of a very large number of operations, and if he saw he foresaw any difficulty or was in doubt about any of them, he would send a minute to Mr. Dean which he would first clear with S.I.S. In most cases Mr. Dean would refer the F.O.A. report to Sir I. Kirkpatrick. Cases put to the Foreign Office by F.O.A. in this way totalled perhaps 25 a year.

*any objection
to any operation submitted
to him for approval or*

Mr. Dean agreed that if a case had been put to F.O.A. and agreed by him, there was no further obligation on 'C' to put it to Sir I. Kirkpatrick, though he had complete right to do so. 'C' was entitled to regard an operation as in order if F.O.A. had cleared it. Mr. Dean had not known beforehand about the October operation. He had only heard about it in an incidental manner afterwards.

Reviewing events ~~after the failure of the operation,~~ Mr. Dean thought that there had been confusion between F.O.A. and C.W.E. He said that the F.O.A. had come to him on the evening of 19th April and told him that a frogman had been lost. Mr. Dean was given to understand that the F.O.A. had not known anything about the operation.

In discussion it became clear that there was a marked divergence of opinion where ultimate responsibility for the operation rested. While acknowledging that they were the normal channel for obtaining Ministerial authority for S.I.S. operations, the Foreign Office view in the present instance was that because the operation was undertaken in this country, responsibility for it had rested with the Admiralty; ~~whose intelligence requirement it was~~ it followed that it seemed to be the Admiralty's responsibility to inform Ministers ~~about it~~. ~~Mr. N.I., on the other hand, had given as his opinion that, since it was a S.I.S. operation, it was one for the Foreign Office to clear; his contention was that, although the Admiralty had in due course agreed to assume responsibility for the cover story, responsibility for the operation itself had rested with S.I.S. throughout. Moreover, 'C' had indicated that he had regarded F.O.A. as the man to get the authority.~~

and had been carried out - in pursuance of an Admiralty requirement and, as they thought, without the Foreign Office

Suggest delete

In further discussion Mr. Dean agreed that if it was the case that the Foreign Office had ~~known~~ about the plans for the operation, ^{in his view} it then became their responsibility. His view had been that since the operation had not been cleared with the F.O.A. the Foreign Office were absolved from responsibility and what was done without their knowledge was the Admiralty's responsibility. Mr. Dean stated that he had not known until after the enquiry instigated by the Prime Minister had begun, that 'C' had thought that the F.O.A. had cleared the operation.

approved

but he added that he did not know whether Sir I. Kirkpatrick would agree with this view.

Mr. Dean said that in his opinion there was no doubt that once enquiries began to be made about Commander Crabb, the only course was for the Admiralty to assume responsibility for covering action. In the absence of a properly pre-arranged cover story, there was no alternative, and it would have been impossible, having regard to the peculiar characters involved, to have hushed matters up. He agreed that the prime objective politically would have been to prevent the story breaking, but nevertheless he thought that Ministers should have been told.

In reviewing the reasons for the delay in informing Ministers, Mr. Dean explained that if Sir I. Kirkpatrick had not been at Chequers, he would have told him earlier than the 23rd April. (It was the same week-end as when the story about the Berlin tunnel broke.) He had telephoned Sir I. Kirkpatrick about the latter, since he thought it might cause trouble, and Sir I. Kirkpatrick then told the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister.) It would have been difficult to explain on the telephone about the frogman incident, of which Sir I. Kirkpatrick had no prior knowledge. If he had thought it to be the Foreign Office's responsibility to tell Ministers, Mr. Dean would have gone to Chequers personally. Subsequently his understanding had been that the Admiralty would take the lead in telling Ministers and that the Foreign Office would then follow suit.

Sir Edward Bridges invited Mr. Dean to comment on the faults in machinery which the incident had revealed.

Mr. Dean agreed that there was a well-defined and he hoped clearly understood procedure for obtaining Ministerial authority for special operations mounted by the Services, e.g. CLARET. The procedure was perhaps not so clear in the case of operations by the S.I.S. to meet Service requirements. It was clear that the main fault had been the lack of a comprehensive picture in the Foreign Office ^{and in the Department concerned} of the state of play on the individual operations. D.N.I. had known that CLARET had been turned down and 'C' that the Claridges project had been rejected, but not vice versa. He thought that in future arrangements could be made by which on specified occasions the three directors of Service Intelligence, 'C' and G.C.H.Q. should at an appropriate time pool all their schemes and the reactions which they had separately obtained from Ministers. Alternatively, efforts might be made to draw up a comprehensive list from which Ministers could take their choice. He thought that the J.I.C. might be able to work such a scheme.

Mr. Dean withdrew at 5.45. p.m.

TOP SECRET~~DRAFT~~~~SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE, PART III~~

At 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 14th May, the meeting was resumed. C.W.E. and F.O.A. attended to give evidence.

C.W.E., who has been in the Secret Service since 1942, explained that he was in charge of the section that dealt with operations in Europe, but recently a special section for co-ordinating all anti-Russian activities had been set up and this section was responsible direct to him. He added that the responsibility for obtaining any clearance necessary for the recent operations which were planned for the B. and K. visit was his.

he was not responsible
for operations in the U.K.,
but-

F.O.A., who has been in the Foreign Service since 1935, said he had been Foreign Office Adviser to the Secret Service since March, 1955. He explained that he sat in the next office to 'C' and the system of getting clearance was briefly as follows.

He was asked for his views on particular proposals; he would either feel able to deal with these himself or, if in doubt, he would discuss with the Foreign Office. The sort of operations that were put to him by the Secret Service were those which were particularly delicate (all S.I.S. operations, of course, entailed some risk) but it was their responsibility to decide whether or not to put an operation to him. There was no question of his looking at a programme of forthcoming operations and deciding which of them merited consideration by the Foreign Office. The usual practice was for details of a proposed operation to be sent to him under cover of a written minute, but there were many occasions when he was consulted orally. At this point F.O.A. handed in a memorandum describing the procedure for the clearances of delicate operations which had been prepared in Broadway but with which he found himself in full agreement.

C.W.E. said he agreed with what F.O.A. had said so far. It was quite clear that if a Head of Section thought there was a

significant political implication he would consult F.O.A., who was regarded as the appropriate channel of communication with the Foreign Office.

In going on to describe what had taken place on the case now under consideration, F.O.A. said that on 10th April, C.W.E. brought some papers into his room. The top sheet was a summary of the main operations on which S.I.S. were proposing to embark on the occasion of the B. & K. visit, some independently and some jointly with other Government Departments. ~~He understood~~ ^{He understood} that this list was being shown to him for his information and not for clearance.

He remembered that the list of proposed operations made some references to telephone tapping, aircraft and warships. He said he thought that the minute was on its way to 'C' for his authority. F.O.A. knew that the question of telephone tapping had already been

cleared with Sir K. Kirkpatrick and he had himself given clearance for the ^{attachment of} ~~interpreters~~ ^{to General Zakharov}. He and C.W.E. had a conversation for some ten minutes and spoke mainly of telephone tapping; they did not

discuss the Russian warships and this lack of discussion would suggest that he, F.O.A., ~~knew nothing about the proposed operations against them.~~ He certainly did not know that there was going to be any diving by frogmen, nor indeed that there were to be any under-water activities. His clearance on these points was not asked [and if he had thought about the proposed operations against the warships at all, although that is not to say that he did, he would have assumed that it was an operation for which F.O. authority was not being sought by S.I.S.]

C.W.E. said he always followed the practice of consulting F.O.A. on doubtful cases. On the particular proposals, in connection with the B. and K. visit, he had made it clear on the ^{Preliminary} papers that clearance for all of them would have to be obtained from F.O.A.

It was his belief and recollection that he had shown F.O.A. the list of operations and the progress to date of the clearances and that he asked him if he had any objections to what was proposed. C.W.E.

was unaware that he was being asked to approve the proposed operations, since he always went into such matters in great detail.

[The witness suggested that this passage should be omitted]

he told F.O.A. there were further details of the operations attached to the minute and he asked

did not remember whether or not he specifically ^{used the word} asked for a clearance, but he did ask if F.O.A. had any objections. In their conversation together F.O.A. asked him (C.W.E.) if the operation on the warships had been tied up with the Admiralty and on being told that it had he went on to discuss points arising out of some of the other operations.

C.W.E. left F.O.A. after about ten minutes talking with the clear impression that he had obtained clearance for the operations listed in the minute and he so informed his Chief.

A copy of the minute which C.W.E. showed to F.O.A. is attached. Below this minute was a thick dossier of papers clipped together which went into the operations in much greater detail. The top paper of this dossier of papers made reference to the use of frogmen.

In reply to a question C.W.E. said that he did not send to F.O.A. a copy of the further minutes which he sent to 'C' about the planned operations. He was aware that F.O.A. did not know very much of what had been planned and that what he had seen was a list of operations the ^{detail} nature of which was unspecified. The particular operation against the warships was not considered to be risky and he did not think it necessary to lay any emphasis on it nor to go into detail.

F.O.A. said that had he been aware of the proposal to send a frogman under the Russian cruiser he would have reported the matter to Mr. Dean.

In reply to a question F.O.A. said that he knew nothing of the operation against the cruiser Sverdlov in October, 1955 (when a frogman was sent down). In fact, he did not learn of this until after Commander Crabb had disappeared. C.W.E. said that it was none of his concern at the time and he knew nothing about the Sverdlov operation.

CWE.

In reply to a question F.O.A. said he knew nothing about the operations against our ships in Leningrad. ~~C.W.B. also said he knew nothing,~~ but believed that there was a report from the Admiralty dealing with this.

In dealing with the events after the 19th April, F.O.A. said that the V.C.S.S. telephoned him at about mid-day on 19th April and said that things had gone wrong and that the frogman in Portsmouth had not surfaced. V.C.S.S. rang up later in the day and said that there was still no news of the frogman. F.O.A. asked the V.C.S.S. what were his cover plans, but no definite reply was given. As a result of these two conversations, F.O.A. went to the Foreign Office and reported to Mr. Dean.

F.O.A. thought it was perhaps a week or ten days after 19th April when he first knew that S.I.S. were under the impression that he, F.O.A., had given Foreign Office clearance to the proposal. He did not remember whether or not he had told V.C.S.S. on 19th April that he had not given clearance. He thought that the question of his alleged clearance was not discussed at all in the many meetings which followed Commander Crabb's disappearance on the 19th April and he was not aware by 29th April that the point had assumed importance. He was not present at any of the meetings which took place which discussed the question of putting the matter to Ministers. If he had been asked for his view he would have thought the question should have gone to the First Lord of the Admiralty because the operation had been carried out at the request of the Admiralty and the Admiralty were ^{providing} ~~accepting~~ cover. It was an Admiralty operation ... they had the assistance of A.D.N.I.(F) who offered facilities in the dockyard, etc., etc.

E.R.

TOP SECRETDRAFT

Sir I. Kirkpatrick attended at 11.30 a.m. In reply to a question he said that the Foreign Office knew nothing about the operations against the Sverdlov in October, 1955, nor about the proceedings against our ships in Leningrad.

He said that the Foreign Office were not consulted about the Crabb operation and he thought that the procedure suggested in the J.I.C. report 1084/52 of 8th May, 1952, which said that "full details must be exposed" had not been followed. He agreed that ~~it looked as if~~ ^{the incident showed that} some change in the machinery ^{was} ~~might be thought~~ desirable.

He said that the matter was first reported to him by Mr. Dean on 23rd April with the suggestion that what had happened might give rise to a great deal of fuss in the newspapers, but would probably not, for the following reasons:-

- (a) Admiral Kotov, after his informal dinner with Admiral Burnett, had referred to the frogman incident and implied that the Russians would not make any fuss.
- (b) Commander Crabb had no next of kin.
- (c) Owing to the shape of Portsmouth Harbour and the tides it was not likely that the body would reappear.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick felt that the matter was an Admiralty operation and that ^{it} these were reasons which led the Admiralty, whose responsibility he thought it was, to assume that they need not tell the First Lord, ^{it} ~~It~~ was for the Admiralty to judge. So far as he knew they had never spoken to the Foreign Office about their ex post facto cover story. But the fact that they had been prepared to put one out surely meant that it was for them to ^{decide it with} ~~approach~~ their Ministers. There was a difference, it is true, in agreeing to put out a cover story after the event and in accepting responsibility for the operations, but he still thought that it was for the Admiralty to tell their Ministers. Sir I. Kirkpatrick said that if ~~his~~ ^{the}

E.R.

Foreign Office ^{representative} man in Broadway had cleared the operation he would at once have told the Foreign Secretary, as the Foreign Secretary would then have been presumed to have agreed that it should have taken place.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick thought that when M.I.6. were suborned by Service Departments to mount an operation, it would be useful if the Service Departments concerned were to make sure that Foreign Office clearance had been obtained. He thought it would be useful to consider the suggestion that one Minister might be responsible for all operations. Sir I. Kirkpatrick did not agree that operations by M.I.6. were subject to less exacting standards of morality than those undertaken by the Services themselves, particularly if the Services wished to place the responsibility for such operations on the Foreign Office.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick added that it was not until after the start of the enquiry instigated by the Prime Minister that he knew that 'C' thought that the Foreign Office had cleared this operation.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick withdrew at 12 o'clock.

TOP SECRET,DRAFT

Mr. Hollis attended at 12.15 p.m. He explained that so far as M.I.5. were concerned, they normally went to the Home Secretary to get Ministerial cover. But wherever they were concerned with Diplomatic people they always cleared their proposals with Mr. Dean at the Foreign Office. ^{or well}

They had a clear arrangement with ^{M.I.6} ~~A.W.S.~~ that if the latter were to mount an operation in this country they should keep M.I.5. informed. This would enable M.I.5. to tell the Chief Constable of the area concerned, giving him such details as might be necessary, depending on whether the operation were to be in a civil or in a military area. This procedure was followed in the Crabb case.

On the particular occasion in question both M.I.6. and the Foreign Office knew that the Claridges Operation, which was an M.I.5. responsibility, was turned down. This suggested that the system was working all right.

planning or directing the operation. They simply asked
Mr. Hollis explained that M.I.5. were not ~~really~~ involved in inventing the cover story, although they did act as link with the Chief Constable of Portsmouth.

He thought there would be some advantage in both M.I.5. and M.I.6. getting together more fully on operations which M.I.6. were planning in this country. In view of the increasing difficulties of gleaning intelligence from other countries, there might well be a growing number of such operations taking place. He thought that M.I.5., who had much greater experience ^{of working with the} ~~of~~ law enforcement ^{agencies} ~~in~~ this country, would be able to help M.I.6. on certain problems.

already had great knowledge and experience of handling difficult operations in the U.K. and would
Sir Dick White, who would be taking over on 1st July, ~~would~~ he felt sure, be interested in discussing developments on these lines. It was also possible that the Service Directors of Intelligence would be able to get some help from M.I.5. if they consulted them on procedure for gaining intelligence in this country (e.g. by providing facilities at London Airport, etc.).

Mr. Hollis referred to the part which the press had played in the frogman episode and said how this showed that the chief ^{risk} "enemy" against ^{which} ~~where~~ one had to plan in mounting clandestine operations in this country was not the enemy or the object of the intelligence, but the British press.

M.I.5., who had introduced Mr. ^D Davis to the Chief Constable at Portsmouth on 16th April, learned at mid-day on 19th April that the frogman had not reappeared. But ^{he} ~~he~~, Hollis, ^{saw} ~~did not~~ see Mr. Dean of the Foreign Office ^{on} ~~until~~ 23rd April ^{but} ~~and~~ he did not tell the Home Office until 3rd May. He took the view that both M.I.5. and the Home Office were only on the fringes of this business.

E.R.

~~DRAFT~~TOP SECRET

At 3 p.m. Sir John Lang and Vice Admiral Sir William Davis attended.

✓ As regards the Admiralty's view of their responsibility for operations undertaken by M.I.6 to meet naval intelligence requirements Sir John Lang said that D.N.I. notified M.I.6. of items on which the Admiralty would like information, but it was then for M.I.6. to decide how and when they would try to obtain it; the Admiralty would not expect to be consulted about their methods. The Admiralty took no part in obtaining Ministerial authority for M.I.6. operations nor was it thought that they should, since they had no responsibility for that service in any way.

✓ Greater care had to be exercised over intelligence operations undertaken by the Services than by M.I.6. because of the greater embarrassment and unpleasantness if detected. Generally, Service operations of this kind were limited to those which could be carried out during ostensibly normal activities by H.M. ships or aircraft.

✓ Reviewing lessons learnt, it was agreed that there was a need for a better understanding of departmental responsibilities and for more positive rules both for getting political views and for making these views known to all intelligence agencies.

✓ In the present case the Prime Minister, having turned down the Admiralty proposal for a CLARET operation, it was to be expected that he would, for the same reason, veto others. The Admiralty would contend that since the Foreign Office knew that CLARET had been vetoed, they should have been on the watch for any parallel M.I.6. activities.

✓ M.I.6. should continue to be responsible, however, for deciding whether they needed political clearance for any of their activities and should look to the Foreign Office for authority when in doubt.

E.R.

Neither Sir John Lang nor Sir William Davis had known until recently of the frogman operation against Russian ships at Portsmouth carried out by M.I.6. in October, 1955. They also doubted whether the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, had known. In general, they were not unduly disturbed that M.I.6. should be carrying out operations in a Royal dockyard without the knowledge of either the Admiralty or the Commander-in-Chief. M.I.6. was a subterranean organisation and the fewer who knew what it was about the better. They felt, however, that they might have qualified this view in the case of the October, 1955 operation because of their earlier rejection of a proposal that it should be undertaken by Service divers. [It was arranged that Sir John Lang would provide a note on the way in which this proposal had been put to the Board and on the factors which influenced them to reject it.]

[-] Delete - or substitute:-

Asked whether they persisted in this view having regard to an earlier rejection of a proposal that such an operation should be undertaken by Service divers, they explained that no such proposal had ever come put before the Board of Admiralty. It had been suggested at Departmental level in early discussions about possible intelligence operations in the Oct. 1955 visit but had been abandoned as one the Admiralty did not themselves wish to take part in. This did not inhibit M.I.6 who had their own principles for deciding whether or not to carry out an operation.

Having regard to the venue of the operation and the fact that the frogman was a former RNVR who was well known in naval circles, the Admiralty had felt that there were no practical objections.

On the question why Ministers were not informed earlier, Sir William Davis said that when the position was put to him on the afternoon of 25th April, it was quite clear that the only way to stop the story breaking was to send someone to silence Mr. Pendock (Crabb's employer). He therefore agreed to D.N.I.'s recommendation that the Admiralty should take covering action. He had ^{raised} ~~revised~~ the question of ministerial responsibility and was told that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had been told of the situation some days before and had decided not to tell Ministers. He recognised that when the Admiralty took over the cover story they could not completely disown responsibility and he had felt that it became a shared one. He had said that the Admiralty must keep closely in step with the Foreign Office in regard to telling Ministers: his feeling had been to wait and see the results of Captain Savell's mission before reporting to the First Lord. Captain Savell's action appeared, in fact, to have been effective; it undoubtedly delayed publicity for some days.

Sir John Lang said that the responsibility for informing

E.R.

the afternoon of
the First Lord rested on him from 27th April. His view was that it was inherently an M.I.6. operation, though the Admiralty had been forced to assume shared responsibility. He had been told that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had decided not to tell the Foreign Secretary until the Admiralty told their Minister. On the picture as presented to him, he thought that the risk of a bad break was small and so he decided to carry the responsibility himself and not to tell the First Lord.

✓ Sir John Lang and Sir William Davis withdrew at 3.45 p.m.

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'G' and V.C.S.S. attended at 4 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges asked if they had had any personal knowledge of the October, 1955 operation. 'C' and V.C.S.S. both said that they had not been aware of it until recently. They had not yet been able to discover what, if anything, had been done about political clearance on that occasion. V.C.S.S. said that the main concern of the Foreign Office at that time was to prevent any provocation of defectors. The M.I.6. staffs knew this, perhaps thought that otherwise there was no bar on their activities, and so went ahead without further reference to the Foreign Office. The matter was still being investigated and 'C' would provide a note of the findings. Though there was no question that the April, 1956 operation was one needing Foreign Office clearance, which had been duly sought, the October, 1955 operation was a more borderline case.

V.C.S.S. gave his recollection of his exchanges with F.O.A. subsequent to the failure of the operation on the issue of its clearance. He said that either on the evening of the 19th April or early on the next day, F.O.A. had raised the matter of clearances and he had told F.O.A. that he (F.O.A.) had cleared it. F.O.A. had replied that he had not signed the papers, that they had not been left with him and that he had not looked beyond the first page. In discussing the matter again in his office with F.O.A. about three days afterwards, V.C.S.S. had said he was sorry if F.O.A. thought the approach had been too casual; later, the papers were sent to F.O.A. for his inspection.

dismissed with F.O.A.
and he saw them, and
again much later they
were sent to him.

Questioned whether the approach had not, in fact, been too informal, given the occasion, and whether a more specific approach for the consent of the F.O.A. in writing would not have been more appropriate, V.C.S.S. said that there had not been many occasions for formal clearances during the term of the present F.O.A.; the practice was first to discuss the project with the F.O.A. and if

(F.O.A.)

he thought it should go higher he would, in conjunction with M.I.6., prepare the written submission which he himself would send to the Foreign Office. F.O.A. was always at liberty to retain M.I.6. papers for study and to discuss them with the various Foreign Office departments. There was no ruling that the F.O.A. should be asked for clearance in writing and generally, for obvious reasons, less was put on paper in the organisation than might be the case elsewhere.

Referring to the question put to him on 11th May whether there had been any specific instructions to go ahead with the operation when it was reported that clearance had been given, 'C' said that on looking further into the matter it was clear that none would have been given, since everything was already poised for action as soon as clearance was forthcoming.

'C' tabled a statement indicating the arrangements for the control of the operation and the relations between Mr. D. and Mr. S. He explained that it was the responsibility of Mr. D. to check the details prepared by Mr. S.

'C' said that he had broadly no objection to his statement on errors in trade craft being included in the report.

Referring to the suggestions for more reference to, and increased surveillance by, Ministers in the case of intelligence operations, 'C' said that it should be realised that Ministers had never hitherto wished to enter significantly into the affairs of his organisation. ^{put shortly} M.I.6. had to do unpleasant things and ~~had~~ ^{they} regarded it as ~~his~~ ^{their} job to get them done as best ~~he~~ ^{they} could. ^{The}

point would be put in a longer way. [B]

'C' and V.C.S.S. withdrew at 4.45 p.m. ^{justified}

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Mr. D. and Mr. S. attended at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. D. had been employed in M.I.6 since during the war and Mr. S. since 1950. They were shown the Prime Minister's minute covering the investigation. Sir Edward Brigges said that although it was not a matter on which he had been asked directly to report, he would have to take into account the manner in which the operation had been carried out.

Both men agreed that it would be fair to report that mistakes, for which responsibility lay between them, had been made over "unattributability" and in the lack of a cover plan. In defence they argued that it would in any case have been difficult to disguise Commander Crabb's presence in Portsmouth and that it could only have been explained as a casual visit perhaps to seek orders from his naval acquaintances for furniture from his firm. As for allowing Commander Crabb to wander around Portsmouth, it was explained that the original intention had been to carry out the operation on the morning of the 18th April as the Russian ships arrived; however, the security precautions in the Dockyard ruled out all chance of doing the job at this time without detection and it had therefore to be postponed until the following day. Their opinion of Commander Crabb's personality was at variance with that suggested by the subsequent Press reports. They had judged him as a rather secretive and

/absolutely

absolutely trustworthy person. Looking back, the choice of Commander Crabb may have been unsuitable. Mr. D. added that if Commander Crabb had obeyed instructions he would not have been where the Russians said they saw him. However, they both agreed that arrangements should have been made for a cover plan in the event of Commander Crabb's failing to return and that this was not done.

Mr. S. had had to decide on the method of his approach to Commander Crabb and on the precautions, if any, to take against recognition. He had decided that the purchase of furniture from ^{Communist} Crabb's firm would provide a normal relationship for their connection and that the use of his own name both in this respect and when signing the register would stop curiosity if, while with ^{Communist} Crabb, he had met people that he knew. As it happened, he had seen but managed to avoid a friend of his in Portsmouth. He now agreed that he had taken the wrong course in using his own name and address.

Mr. D. said that the question of canvas did not arise until Commander Crabb suggested that better screening arrangements were desirable. There had been canvas in the boat on the October, 1955, occasion but not this time. It had not been difficult to procure canvas, however, and he did not think there had been any risk in the method adopted. As regards the removal of the pages from the hotel register, it was still his opinion that they could not have been left there.

Mr. D. and Mr. S. withdrew at 5.15 p.m.

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F.O.A. was recalled for further examination at 5.30 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges said that on reading the M.I.6 minute which had been left with him that morning he was bound to say that it laid greater emphasis on the matter of clearances and the position in this respect than he had previously understood. It seemed to him that the only inference to be drawn was that the minute was wholly concerned with clearances and that F.O.A. was open to blame if he had not acquainted himself of the position in this respect.

F.O.A. said that when the paper was brought to him by C.W.E. the latter did not ask for clearance; at no time did they discuss operations against Soviet warships. C.W.E. made no attempt to explain the details and C.W.E. must have known that F.O.A. was not aware of them and moreover had not asked for them as was F.O.A.'s usual custom when dealing with clearances. While agreeing that he must have read the covering minute F.O.A. said that he did not read the papers behind and that he was not asked nor did he have the impression that he was being asked, to clear the operation. His understanding was that the minute was going to "C" and that it was merely being shown to him for information. It was quite wrong for C.W.E. to have left thinking that he had cleared the operation with F.O.A. It did not occur to F.O.A. to follow its progress since the practice was for M.I.6 to ask only for clearance for those operations for which they thought it necessary.

/F.O.A.

F.O.A. explained that his father's funeral had taken place the next day. He had been worried by family matters for some weeks but he would not suggest that these had any influence on the present affair.

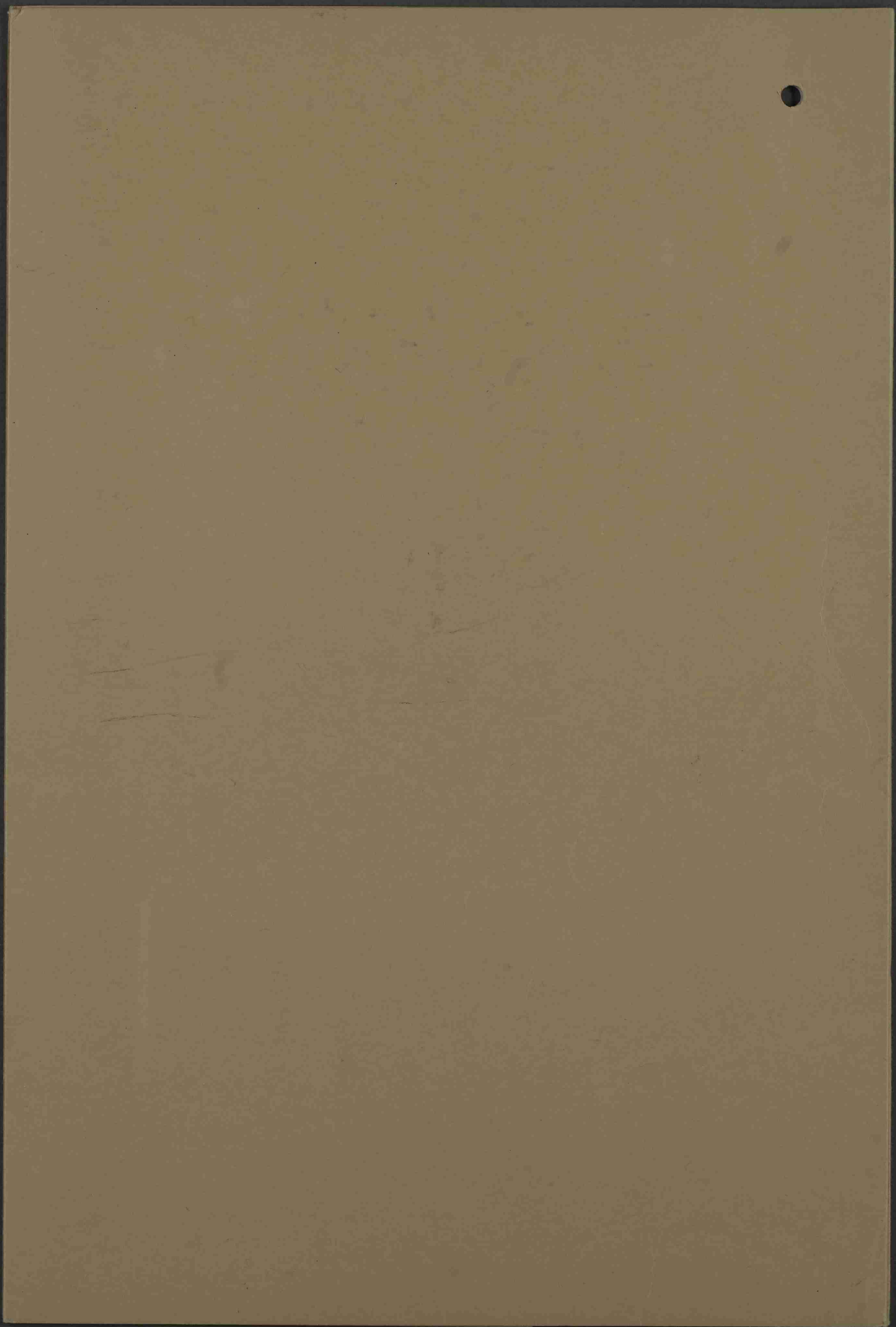
F.O.A. agreed that the procedure adopted between M.I.6 and the F.O.A. in obtaining clearances had been on the whole informal. Cases referred to the F.O.A. would not necessarily be minuted or initialled by him. In some cases the S.I.S. officer would record their agreement on the papers.

Sir Edward Bridges then informed F.O.A. that whereas that morning F.O.A. had said that he could not recall when he was told that he had been ^htought by M.I.6 to have cleared the operation, the V.C.S.S. had said that he himself had told F.O.A. this on either the 19th or 20th April, had referred to the matter again about three days later and subsequently had sent the papers for F.O.A. to see.

F.O.A. said that he now recollected that these conversations had taken place but said that he could not remember the dates. He thought that it might have been ten days before he saw the papers.

When asked if and on what date he had informed his superiors in the Foreign Office of the M.I.6 impression that he had cleared the operation, F.O.A. said that he did not think that he had done so. It had not come out until the 8th May when Sir Norman Brook made his report.

[In his letter of 15th May F.O.A. said that he had no comment on the record of this discussion]



CAB 301/123

(3)

FROGMAN: The Bridge Enquiry into the
disappearance of Commander Crabbs, 1956: Summary
of Evidence

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

May 15, 1956.

TOP SECRET

Dear Bridges,

You invited me yesterday evening to let you have any further comments that might occur to me on my second examination.

2. I have some further comments which I have ventured to set down in the attached note.

Yours sincerely,

M. S. Williams.

(M.S. Williams)

Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY.

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Although I agree that the internal S.I.S. minute which you read to me yesterday evening might imply that clearance would be needed for certain operations the minute was not in fact addressed to me nor did I understand that it was being presented to me as a request for Foreign Office clearance for any of them. In my own mind and conscience I am satisfied on that point. As I said yesterday I understood that I was being informed of plans under consideration by S.I.S. for exploiting the visit of the Soviet leaders for my own information, as has often happened in the past in regard to S.I.S. operations. This is done in order to enable me better to understand their problems and to put their case to the Foreign Office at times when Foreign Office approval or advice is requested. This basic misunderstanding undoubtedly coloured my subsequent perusal of the S.I.S. minute and the course of my conversation with Mr. Lockhart.

I submit that this is supported by the fact that as recorded by Mr. Lockhart most of our discussion was concerned not with the operations against the warships which it is alleged I was being asked to approve but with telephone operations for which S.I.S. do not claim to have been seeking approval. It is my invariable rule to go into great detail before clearing S.I.S. proposals myself or submitting them for clearance to the Foreign Office. I am very careful about this. It is inconceivable to me that I should not have done so in the present case had I realised that I was being asked for clearance.

Mr. Lockhart made it clear yesterday that he knew that I was not aware of the details of the operations against the warships and in my submission it was hardly reasonable that he should have represented to higher authority that I had cleared them. I would wish to add at once that I am sure that he failed to bring the details of the operations to my attention because he considered them to be foolproof and not out of any desire to deceive. But the effect was that my approval was claimed for something for which it had not been given or, in my belief, sought. I was told only after the event that I was supposed to have cleared the paper.

It is material that S.I.S. do not normally seek Foreign Office clearance for operations which contain no element of risk. Yesterday Mr. Lockhart said that in his view this operation was not risky. It is therefore not clear why S.I.S. now claim that this was an operation requiring in their view clearance by the Foreign Office; or that it was in fact their intention to seek clearance.

You said yesterday evening that it had made a bad impression

- (i) that I had not been able to remember in the morning discussion when it was that I learnt that S.I.S. considered that I had cleared the operations;

(ii)/....

(ii) that I had not told the Foreign Office when I had discovered this fact.

The inference was that I was trying improperly to conceal something. I was nonplussed by your implied accusation, which, with respect, I consider to be entirely unjustified and I would wish to make the following points.

In the period immediately following Commander Crabb's disappearance I was closely involved in the discussions to find a way of dealing with the many practical problems resulting from his disappearance. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that I am not able to remember the exact dates, but on this I am quite happy to accept Air Commodore Easton's recollection. As regards informing the Foreign Office I did not know that the question of this misunderstanding was material during that period. Nor apparently did "C" since he did not do so either.

(M.S. Williams)
May 15, 1956.

E.P.

TOP SECRET

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Sir Edward Bridges held the first meeting of his enquiry, carried out under Prime Minister's minute of 9th May, at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 11th May. Messrs. Bligh and Darracott were in attendance as Secretaries.

"C" and D.N.I. were the first to attend and made a long and detailed report. The following is a resume of the important points.

1. The Inception of the Operation

- (a) The visits of Soviet warships to West European ports presented a rare opportunity for intelligence procurement. "C" thought it would be difficult to overstress the importance which was attached in Intelligence circles to the visit of the Russian ships.
- (b) When H.M. ships had visited Leningrad they had been subjected to a pretty thorough scrutiny by the Russians who had used a number of methods of gleaning information. In particular, when the ships had requested that a stern buoy be laid for one of the destroyers the Russians had sent three times as many divers as were necessary to moor the buoy. It seemed beyond reasonable doubt that some of these divers had taken the opportunity for under-water examination of British ships (see extract from D.N.I. report).

2. Clearance for the Operation

A number of possible operations for the B. and K. visit had been examined. These included:

- (a) Microphones in Claridges
- (b) Telephone tapping
- (c) Warships
- (d) Soviet aircraft
- (e) Briefing the interpreters
- (f) Car microphones
- (g) Soviet detection methods
- (h) use of agent as interpreter

E.R.

It was accepted that all these operations would need Foreign Office clearance which, in the case of the M.I.6 operations entailed reference to the Foreign Office Adviser. This is not uncommon and there are special arrangements in force to enable this to be done conveniently and quickly.

An officer (Minister, A.5 rank) from the Foreign Service is attached to "C"'s staff and his job is to look at possible operations referred to him and decide whether "Foreign Office" clearance is required and, if so, whether he can give it himself or refer it higher. When the senior S.I.S. officer took the papers to F.O.A. with instructions to so clear them with him, the former recorded in a minute to "C" that he had cleared 2(c) and 2(d) with F.O.A. He also stated that F.O.A. notes that if any telephone tapping is indulged in F.O. clearance will have to be obtained. When "C" read this minute he also knew that (a) had been referred by M.I.5 to the Foreign Office, who had raised no objection. (This went subsequently to the Prime Minister, who turned it down, but this was not at the time known by "C"). "C" also knew that (e) and (h) had been cleared in the Foreign Office and that his Deputy had ruled out (f); responsibility for (g) lay with M.I.5.

Sir Edward Bridges asked about the clearance of operations with the Foreign Office. "C" said that the normal channel of approach to the Foreign Office was through the F.O.A. who was a political watchdog. But at the same time it was important not to ascribe overriding responsibility for the operation to the F.O.A.

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His job was to look at all the possible operations referred to him and to comment on them from the political angle. For example, he might consider that such-and-such was rather tricky and should be put up to higher authority, or that such-and-such was bad and should be ruled out. In the former case he would consult the Foreign Office; "C" would expect to be brought in on any projects so referred which were likely to go to the Permanent Under-Secretary level. In the latter case, the matter was then referred by M.I.6 to "C" himself and if he thought it should be pressed he would take it up with Sir I. Kirkpatrick. Thus, it might be argued that as the F.O.A. had raised no objection on the B. and K. proposal M.I.6 could feel that they had technically got Foreign Office clearance. But "C" thought that nothing in these arrangements could detract from his own responsibility for the operation as a whole provided that he had - as he understood - received "Foreign Office" clearance.

For the purpose of record it could be noted that at this stage the Admiralty was a client and not an operating agent although it gave certain assistance to the operation.

3. Diary of Events

"C" and D.N.I. explained what had taken place between April 17th and May 9th and the substance of their remarks is contained in the Factual Narrative attached. This explanation necessarily took some time.

4. The Hotel Register

The decision to tear the page out of the hotel register was discussed. The instructions to Mr. D. were that he should consult the Chief Constable at Portsmouth and report back to Headquarters to convey the views of the local authorities. No authority was given to the local authorities to act as they thought fit. They were merely asked to advise, but they did, in the event, regard themselves as under authority to act as they thought fit.

E.R.

5. Errors in "Trade Craft"

"C" drew attention to a number of errors which had been made which all led towards "attributability" (i.e., the connection of the operation with an official organisation) in the event of things going wrong. The object of an operation of this sort should be to achieve complete "unattributability". If the operation had been carried out in the same way as with the visit of the Sverdlov in October, 1955, then Commander Crabb's disappearance would have been a complete mystery; nobody would have known what had happened to him. But as it was Commander Crabb would seem to have told his partner that he was going to Portsmouth and that he was going with Mr. S. Commander Crabb should not have called in at Vernon nor should he have wandered about Portsmouth after the trial run. Mr. S., who was known by his friends and relatives to be a temporary Foreign Office official, should not have signed his real name and address in the hotel register; Mr. S. should certainly not have written a cheque to Commander Crabb; and, finally, the arrangements for providing canvas should have been better. Moreover, no thought would appear to have been given to providing a cover plan for use if things went wrong. If things had gone properly there would have been no need for a cover story or any other story.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.30 p.m., to be resumed at 3.30 p.m.

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When the meeting resumed at 3.30 p.m. "C" said that he wished to make it clear that the F.O.A. was given the opportunity to study the details of the projected operations but did not avail himself of it.

Sir Edward Bridges asked who had finally authorised the frogman operation. "C" said that it had all along been realised that when the list of operations had been finalised "Foreign Office" clearance would have to be obtained. It was taken for granted that once Foreign Office clearance had been obtained everything could go ahead. Both "C" and V.C.S.S. knew how the technical preparations were developing and that clearance was being sought. When C.W.E. reported that clearance had been obtained the operation was automatically put in train. "C" had previously warned the responsible officer that the operations it was intended to carry out in Portsmouth were extremely delicate.

D.N.I. then made a general statement as follows.

The Admiralty have an important requirement for information on the under-water noise characteristics of Russian ships. This requirement dated December, 1954, had been circulated to all Intelligence Agencies to do what they could to meet it. There was a tacit understanding that N.I.D. would look to S.I.S. to undertake those clandestine operations which the Navy could not do for fear of embarrassment if they were discovered. Before the Russian Naval visit to Portsmouth in October, 1955, D.N.I. had submitted verbally plans for special operations on that occasion to V.C.N.S. who had rejected the mounting of operations by Naval divers. S.I.S. subsequently undertook the operation. It was successful and valuable information was obtained.

Before the April visit it was agreed that in dividing the projected operations between N.I.D. and S.I.S., N.I.D. would seek to undertake (a) an electronic intercept from an aircraft, (CLARET) and (b) an armour

E.R.

measurement and S.I.S. (c) the frogman operation. D.N.I. proceeded to seek Board approval for the Naval operations. The armour measurement project was rejected by the First Lord; N.I.D. subsequently asked S.I.S. to take over the project and attempt it in foreign waters. The request for authority for CLARET was submitted to the Prime Minister by the First Lord on 6th April but was rejected by the Prime Minister on 12th April.

D.N.I. stated that he never enquired how and when S.I.S. obtained clearance for their operations. He did not think it his affair. He had always regarded S.I.S. activities as governed by a different standard of values, with entirely different penalties if caught out. It was not N.I.D.'s practice to enquire into the details of S.I.S. operations but if asked for assistance they would always help where they could. In the present instance N.I.D. had given a naval officer's name, as that of an experienced diver, on the understanding that S.I.S. would make the approach to him. N.I.D. had also helped by providing passes to the dockyard.

The understanding was that any operations which were carried out by S.I.S. would not be attributable to the Navy, e.g., instructions had been given that the naval officer was not to dive.

Commander Crabb's first dive was abortive. N.I.D.'s representative was so informed and that a further attempt would be made the following morning. He was not asked for any more help and Mr. S. appeared satisfied with the position. When Commander Crabb failed to return the N.I.D. representative arranged for a boat to be provided for a search. The naval officer was told to go back to Vernon and disassociate himself from further activity. The N.I.D. representative told S.I.S. that a full search with all available facilities could be arranged but advised against it since it would reveal the whole story without there being any hope of saving Commander Crabb.

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In reply to a question by "C", D.N.I. agreed that bearing in mind the kit which Commander Crabb had been using there would have been no practical value in such a search.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) Board of Admiralty approval was necessary for operations such as those assigned to N.I.D. on this occasion. If the First Lord agreed, he made a submission to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. It was D.N.I.'s practice to inform Mr. Dean beforehand so that the proposal could be put up simultaneously in both departments. There were perhaps half a dozen cases a year in which clearance at such high level was necessary.
- (b) The armour measurement project and CLARET were submitted separately. When the First Lord rejected the former, N.I.D. asked S.I.S. to do it abroad if they could. The Prime Minister's rejection of CLARET was notified to D.N.I. who told his staff. The ruling was not passed to S.I.S. It was considered unnecessary to do so as they were regarded as working to entirely different standards. N.I.D. generally were reluctant to enquire too deeply into the codes and methods of S.I.S.
- (c) With the qualification that there was always a greater risk under water in the event of a faint or a heart attack, the operation was as simple and as easy to carry out without fear of detection as could be wished. D.N.I. agreed that in discussion prior to the operation the view was expressed by the Admiralty that it was a reasonable and safe one to attempt.

E.R.

Sir Edward Bridges then reviewed the circumstances in which the Admiralty were brought in after the failure of the operation and the following points were made:

- (a) D.N.I. agreed on the 25th April to make a recommendation to V.C.N.S., that the Admiralty should assume responsibility in order to avoid risk of disclosure while the Russian Ministers were in the United Kingdom. This was the prime objective of everyone concerned at that time. D.N.I. considered that it was the Admiralty's job not so much to cover the story when it broke as to cover things to prevent it breaking though he realised that if it did break, the Admiralty would have to deal with it.
- (b) Neither D.N.I. nor "C" thought the story would grow in the way it had. "C" had felt that if the Admiralty could bring pressure to bear on any newspaper making enquiries it might damp the affair down. S.I.S. and the Foreign Office were obviously precluded from taking any action themselves.
- (c) By the 25th April it became obvious that very speedy action was essential to stop the story breaking. This time factor probably influenced D.N.I. and V.C.N.S. to take action forthwith without reference to higher authority. For the next two days the press were quiet and D.N.I. saw no reason to report the matter higher than V.C.N.S. At this time there was perhaps a general concern not to add to Ministers' worries at a critical time. It also happened that there was a further two days' press silence after the Secretary of the Admiralty was informed on 27th April.

E.R.

- (d) D.N.I. emphasised that the agreement of the Admiralty to provide cover did not in his view imply that the Admiralty were carrying full responsibility for the situation and that it was up to them to tell Ministers. He had regarded this as a Foreign Office responsibility.
 - (e) "C" agreed that for his part he had regarded the decision for telling the Foreign Secretary as resting with Sir I. Kirkpatrick; the latter having been informed. "C" felt that his main concern was to keep the story from the press as long as he could.
 - (f) The action taken by the Admiralty succeeded in preventing the matter from breaking wild until 3rd May.
- "C" and D.N.I. then withdrew at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. Dean attended at 5.0 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges enquired about the system by which S.I.S. obtained Foreign Office clearance for their operations.

Mr. Dean explained that there were two ways in which S.I.S. obtained political clearance when this was necessary:

- (a) In certain highly secret cases "C" went direct to Sir I. Kirkpatrick. He would normally inform Mr. Dean that he was doing so. Such instances were rare, perhaps not as many as half a dozen a year, and were always put orally.
- (b) In other cases Foreign Office clearance was obtained through the F.O.A., who had discretion to agree or to reject S.I.S. proposals. The F.O.A. saw or heard of a very large number of operations. If he saw any objection to any operation submitted to him for approval or foresaw any difficulty or was in doubt about any of them, he

E.R.

would send a minute to Mr. Dean which he would first clear with S.I.S. In most cases Mr. Dean would refer the F.O.A. report to Sir I. Kirkpatrick. Cases put to the Foreign Office by F.O.A. in this way totalled perhaps 25 a year.

Mr. Dean agreed that if a case had been put to F.O.A. and agreed by him, there was no further obligation on "C" to put it to Sir I. Kirkpatrick, though he had complete right to do so. "C" was entitled to regard an operation as in order if F.O.A. had cleared it. Mr. Dean had not known beforehand about the October operation. He had only heard about it in an incidental manner afterwards.

Reviewing events, Mr. Dean thought that there had been confusion between F.O.A. and C.W.E. He said that the F.O.A. had come to him on the evening of 19th April and told him that a frogman had been lost. Mr. Dean was given to understand that the F.O.A. had not known anything about the operation.

In discussion it became clear that there was a marked divergence of opinion where ultimate responsibility for the operation rested. While acknowledging that they were the normal channel for obtaining Ministerial authority for S.I.S. operations, the Foreign Office view in the present instance was that because the operation was undertaken in this country and had been carried out in pursuance of an Admiralty requirement and, as they thought, without the knowledge of the Foreign Office, responsibility for it had rested with the Admiralty; it followed that it seemed to be the Admiralty's responsibility to inform Ministers.

In further discussion Mr. Dean agreed that if it was the case that the Foreign Office had approved the plans for the operation, in his view it then became their responsibility, but he added that he did not know whether Sir I. Kirkpatrick would agree with this view. His view had been that

E.R.

since the operation had not been cleared with the F.O.A. the Foreign Office were absolved from responsibility and what was done without their knowledge was the Admiralty's responsibility. Mr. Dean stated that he had not known until after the enquiry instigated by the Prime Minister had begun, that "C" had thought that the F.O.A. had cleared the operation.

Mr. Dean said that in his opinion there was no doubt that once enquiries began to be made about Commander Crabb, the only course was for the Admiralty to assume responsibility for covering action. In the absence of a properly pre-arranged cover story, there was no alternative, and it would have been impossible, having regard to the peculiar characters involved, to have hushed matters up. He agreed that the prime objective politically would have been to prevent the story breaking, but nevertheless he thought that Ministers should have been told.

In reviewing the reasons for the delay in informing Ministers, Mr. Dean explained that if Sir I. Kirkpatrick had not been at Chequers, he would have told him earlier than the 23rd April. (It was the same weekend as when the story about the Berlin tunnel broke. He had telephoned Sir I. Kirkpatrick about the latter, since he thought it might cause trouble, and Sir I. Kirkpatrick then told the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister.) It would have been difficult to explain on the telephone about the frogman incident, of which Sir I. Kirkpatrick had no prior knowledge. If he had thought it to be the Foreign Office's responsibility to tell Ministers, Mr. Dean would have gone to Chequers personally. Subsequently his understanding had been that the Admiralty would take the lead in telling Ministers and that the Foreign Office would then follow suit.

E.R.

Sir Edward Bridges invited Mr. Dean to comment on the faults in machinery which the incident had revealed.

Mr. Dean agreed that there was a well- defined and he hoped clearly understood procedure for obtaining Ministerial authority for special operations mounted by the Services, e.g., CLARET. The procedure was perhaps not so clear in the case of operations by the S.I.S. to meet Service requirements. It was clear that the main fault had been the lack of a comprehensive picture in the Foreign Office and in the departments concerned of the state of play on the individual operations. D.N.I. had known that CLARET had been turned down and "C" that the Claridges project had been rejected, but not vice versa. He thought that in future arrangements could be made by which on specified occasions the three directors of Service Intelligence, "C" and G.C.H.Q. should at an appropriate time pool all their schemes and the reactions which they had separately obtained from Ministers. Alternatively, efforts might be made to draw up a comprehensive list from which Ministers could take their choice. He thought that the J.I.C. might be able to work such a scheme.

Mr. Dean withdrew at 5.45 p.m.

E.R.

At 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 14th May, the meeting was resumed. C.W. E. and F.O.A. attended to give evidence.

C.W.E., who has been in the Secret Service since 1942, explained that he was in charge of the section that dealt with operations in Europe, but recently a special section for co-ordinating all anti-Russian activities had been set up and this section was responsible direct to him. He added that he was not responsible for operations in the U.K. but the responsibility for obtaining any clearance necessary for the recent operations which were planned for the B. and K. visit was his.

F.O.A., who has been in the Foreign Service since 1935, said he had been Foreign Office adviser to the Secret Service since March, 1955. He explained that he sat in the next office to "C" and the system of getting clearance was briefly as follows.

He was asked for his views on particular proposals; he would either feel able to deal with these himself or, if in doubt, he would discuss with the Foreign Office. The sort of operations that were put to him by the Secret Service were those which were particularly delicate (all S.I.S. operations, of course, entailed some risk) but it was their responsibility to decide whether or not to put the operation to him. There was no question of his looking at a programme of forthcoming operations and deciding which of them merited consideration by the Foreign Office. The usual practice was for details of a proposed operation to be sent to him under cover of a written minute, but there were many occasions when he was consulted orally. At this point F.O.A. handed in a memorandum describing the procedure for the clearances of delicate operations which had been prepared in Broadway but with which he found himself in full agreement.

E.R.

C.W.E. said he agreed with what F.O.A. had said so far. It was quite clear that if a Head of Section thought there was a significant political implication he would consult F.O.A., who was regarded as the appropriate channel of communication with the Foreign Office.

In going on to describe what had taken place on the case now under consideration, F.O.A. said that on 10th April, C.W.E. brought some papers into his room. The top sheet was a summary of the main operations on which S.I.S. were proposing to embark on the occasion of the B. and K. visit, some independently and some jointly with other Government departments. He understood that this list was being shown to him for his information and not for clearance. He remembered that the list of proposed operations made some references to telephone tapping, aircraft and warships. He said he thought that the minute was on its way to "C" for his authority. F.O.A. knew that the question of telephone tapping had already been cleared with Sir I. Kirkpatrick and he had himself given clearance for the attachment of an interpreter to General Zakharov. He and C.W.E. had a conversation for some ten minutes and spoke mainly of telephone tapping; they did not discuss the Russian warships and this lack of discussion would suggest that he, F.O.A., was unaware that he was being asked to approve the proposed operations, since he always went into such matters in great detail. He certainly did not know that there was going to be any diving by frogmen, nor indeed that there were to be any under-water activities. His clearance on these points was not asked [and if he had thought about the proposed operations against the warships at all, although that is not to say that he did, he would have assumed that it was an operation for which F.O. authority was not being sought by S.I.S.]

[The witness suggested that this passage should be omitted.]

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C.W.E. said he always followed the practice of consulting F.O.A. on doubtful cases. On the particular proposals, in connection with the B. and K. visit, he had made it clear on the preliminary papers that clearance for all of them would have to be obtained from F.O.A. It was his belief and recollection that he had shown F.O.A. the list of operations and the progress to date of the clearances and that he told F.O.A. there were further details of the operations attached to the minute and he asked him if he had any objections to what was proposed. C.W.E. did not remember whether or not he specifically used the word clearance, but he did ask if F.O.A. had any objections. In their conversation together F.O.A. asked him (C.W.E.) if the operation on the warships had been tied up with the Admiralty and on being told that it had he went on to discuss points arising out of some of the other operations.

C.W.E. left F.O.A. after about ten minutes talking with the clear impression that he had given F.O.A. fair opportunity of asking any questions he wanted to and had obtained clearance for the operations listed in the minute and he so informed his Chief.

A copy of the minute which C.W.E. showed to F.O.A. is attached. Below this minute was a thick dossier of papers clipped together which went into the operations in much greater detail. The top paper of this dossier of papers made reference to the use of frogmen.

In reply to a question C.W.E. said that he did not send to F.O.A. a copy of the further minutes which he sent to 'C' about the planned operations. He was aware that F.O.A. did not know very much of what had been planned and that what he had seen was a list of operations the detail of which was unspecified. The particular operation against the warships was not considered to be risky and

/he

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he did not think it necessary to lay any emphasis on it nor to go into detail.

F.O.A. said that had he been aware of the proposal to send a frogman under the Russian cruiser he would have reported the matter to Mr. Dean.

In reply to a question F.O.A. said that he knew nothing of the operation against the cruiser Sverdlov in October, 1955 (when a frogman was sent down). In fact, he did not learn of this until after Commander Crabb had disappeared. C.W.E. said that it was none of his concern at the time and he knew nothing about the Sverdlov operation.

In reply to a question C.W.E. said he knew nothing about the operations against our ships in Leningrad, but believed that there was a report from the Admiralty dealing with this.

In dealing with the events after the 19th April, F.O.A. said that the V.C.S.S. telephoned him at about mid-day on 19th April and said that things had gone wrong and that the frogman in Portsmouth had not surfaced. V.C.S.S. rang up later in the day and said that there was still no news of the frogman. F.O.A. asked the V.C.S.S. what were his cover plans, but no definite reply was given. As a result of these two conversations, F.O.A. went to the Foreign Office and reported to Mr. Dean.

F.O.A. thought it was perhaps a week or ten days after 19th April when he first knew that S.I.S. were under the impression that he, F.O.A., had given Foreign Office clearance to the proposal. He did not remember whether or not he had told V.C.S.S. on 19th April that he had not given clearance. He thought that the question of his alleged clearance was not discussed at all in the many meetings which followed Commander Crabb's disappearance on the 19th April and he was not aware by 29th April that the point had assumed importance. He was not present at any of the meetings which took

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place which discussed the question of putting the matter to Ministers. If he had been asked for his view he would have thought the question should have gone to the First Lord of the Admiralty because the operation had been carried out at the request of the Admiralty and the Admiralty were providing cover. It was an Admiralty operation ... they had the assistance of A.D.N.I.(F) who offered facilities in the dockyard, etc., etc.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick attended at 11.30 a.m. In reply to a question he said that the Foreign Office knew nothing about the operations against the Sverdlov in October, 1955, nor about the proceedings against our ships in Leningrad.

He said that the Foreign Office were not consulted about the Crabb operation and he thought that the procedure suggested in the J.I.C. report 1084/52 of 8th May, 1952 which said that "full details must be exposed" had not been followed. He agreed that the incident showed that some change in the machinery was desirable.

He said that the matter was first reported to him by Mr. Dean on 23rd April with the suggestion that what had happened might give rise to a great deal of fuss in the newspapers, but would probably not, for the following reasons:

- (a) Admiral Kotov, after his informal dinner with Admiral Burnett, had referred to the frogman incident and implied that the Russians would not make any fuss.
- (b) Commander Crabb had no next of kin.
- (c) Owing to the shape of Portsmouth Harbour and the tides it was not likely that the body would reappear.

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Sir I. Kirkpatrick felt that the matter was an Admiralty operation and that if these were reasons which led the Admiralty, whose responsibility he thought it was, to assume that they need not tell the First Lord, it was for the Admiralty to judge. So far as he knew they had never spoken to the Foreign Office about their ex post facto cover story. But the fact that they had been prepared to put one out surely meant that it was for them to clear it with their Ministers. There was a difference, it is true, in agreeing to put out a cover story after the event and in accepting responsibility for the operations, but he still thought that it was for the Admiralty to tell their Ministers. Sir I. Kirkpatrick said that if the Foreign Office representative in Broadway had cleared the operation he would at once have told the Foreign Secretary, as the Foreign Secretary would then have been presumed to have agreed that it should have taken place.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick thought that when M.I.6 were suborned by Service Departments to mount the operation, it would be useful if the Service Departments concerned were to make sure that Foreign Office clearance had been obtained. He thought it would be useful to consider the suggestion that one Minister might be responsible for all operations. Sir I. Kirkpatrick did not agree that operations by M.I.6 were subject to less exacting standards of morality than those undertaken by the Services themselves, particularly if the Services wished to place the responsibility for such operations on the Foreign Office.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick added that it was not until after the start of the enquiry instigated by the Prime Minister that he knew that "C" thought that the Foreign Office had cleared this operation.

Sir I. Kirkpatrick withdrew at 12 o'clock.

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Mr. Hollis attended at 12.15 p.m. He explained that so far as M.I.5 were concerned, they normally went to the Home Secretary to get Ministerial cover. But wherever they were concerned with Diplomatic people they always cleared their proposals with Mr. Dean at the Foreign Office as well.

They had a clear arrangement with M.I.6 that if the latter were to mount an operation in this country they should keep M.I.5 informed. This would enable M.I.5 to tell the Chief Constable of the area concerned, giving him such details as might be necessary, depending on whether the operation were to be in a civil or in a military area. This procedure was followed in the Crabb case.

On the particular occasion in question both M.I.6 and the Foreign Office knew that the Claridges Operation, which was an M.I.5 responsibility, was turned down. This suggested that the system was working all right.

Mr. Hollis explained that M.I.5 were not involved in planning or directing the operation. They simply acted as link with the Chief Constable of Portsmouth.

He thought there would be some advantage in both M.I.5 and M.I.6 getting together more fully on operations which M.I.6 were planning in this country. In view of the increasing difficulties of gleaning intelligence from other countries, there might well be a growing number of such operations taking place. He thought that M.I.5, who had much greater experience of working with the law enforcement agencies in this country, would be able to help M.I.6 on certain problems.

Sir Dick White, who would be taking over on 1st July, already had great knowledge and experience of handling difficult operations in the U.K. and would, he felt sure, be interested in discussing developments on these lines.

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Mr. Hollis referred to the part which the press had played in the frogman episode and said how this showed that the chief risk against which one had to plan in mounting clandestine operations in this country was not the enemy or the object of the intelligence, but the British press.

M.I.5, who had introduced Mr. D. to the Chief Constable at Portsmouth on 16th April, learned at mid-day on 19th April that the frogman had not reappeared. Mr. Hollis said he saw Mr. Dean of the Foreign Office on 23rd April but he did not tell the Home Office until 3rd May. He took the view that both M.I.5 and the Home Office were only on the fringes of this business.

At 3.0 p.m. Vice Admiral Sir William Davis and Sir John Lang attended.

As regards the Admiralty's view of their responsibility for operations undertaken by M.I.6 to meet naval intelligence requirements, Sir John Lang said that D.N.I. notified M.I.6 of items on which the Admiralty would like information, but it was then for M.I.6 to decide how and when they would try to obtain it; the Admiralty would not expect to be consulted about their methods. The Admiralty took no part in obtaining Ministerial authority for M.I.6 operations nor was it thought that they should, since they had no responsibility for that service in any way.

Greater care had to be exercised over intelligence operations undertaken by the Services than by M.I.6 because of the greater embarrassment and unpleasantness if detected. Generally, Service operations of this kind were limited to those which could be carried out during ostensibly normal activities by H.M. ships or aircraft.

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Reviewing lessons learnt, it was agreed that there was a need for a better understanding of departmental responsibilities and for more positive rules both for getting political views and for making these views known to all intelligence agencies.

In the present case the Prime Minister, having turned down the Admiralty proposal for a CLARET operation, it was to be expected that he would, for the same reason, veto others. The Admiralty would contend that since the Foreign Office knew that CLARET had been vetoed, they should have been on the watch for any parallel M.I.6 activities.

M.I.6 should continue to be responsible, however, for deciding whether they needed political clearance for any of their activities and should look to the Foreign Office for authority when in doubt.

Neither Sir William Davis nor Sir John Lang had known until recently of the frogman operation against Russian ships at Portsmouth carried out by M.I.6 in October, 1955. They also doubted whether the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, had known. In general, they were not unduly disturbed that M.I.6 should be carrying out operations in a Royal dockyard without the knowledge of either the Admiralty or the Commander-in-Chief. M.I.6 was a subterranean organisation and the fewer who knew what it was about the better.

On the question why Ministers were not informed earlier, Sir William Davis said that when the position was put to him on the afternoon of 25th April, it was quite clear that the only way to stop the story breaking was to send someone to silence Mr. Pendock (Crabb's employer). He therefore agreed to D.N.I.'s recommendation that the Admiralty should take covering action. Having regard to the venue of the operation and the fact that the frogman was a former Lt. Commander R.N.V.R. who was well known in naval circles, the V.C.N.S. had felt that there was no practicable alternative. He had

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raised the question of ministerial responsibility and was told that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had been told of the situation some days before and had decided not to tell Ministers. He recognised that when the Admiralty took over the cover story they could not completely disown responsibility and he had felt that it became a shared one. He had said that the Admiralty must keep closely in step with the Foreign Office in regard to telling Ministers: his feeling had been to wait and see the results of Captain Sarell's mission before reporting to the First Lord. Captain Sarell's action appeared, in fact, to have been effective; it undoubtedly delayed publicity for some days.

Sir John Lang said that the responsibility for informing the First Lord rested on him from the afternoon of 27th April. His view was that it was inherently an M.I.6 operation, though the Admiralty had been forced to assume shared responsibility. He had been told that Sir I. Kirkpatrick had decided not to tell the Foreign Secretary until the Admiralty told their Minister. On the picture as presented to him, he thought that the risk of a bad break was small and so he decided to carry the responsibility himself and not to tell the First Lord.

Sir William Davis and Sir John Lang withdrew at 3.45 p.m.

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"C" and V.C.S.S. attended at 4 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges asked if they had had any personal knowledge of the October, 1955, operation. "C" and V.C.S.S. both said that they had not been aware of it until recently. They had not yet been able to discover what, if anything, had been done about political clearance on that occasion. V.C.S.S. said that the main concern of the Foreign Office at that time was to prevent any provocation of defectors. The M.I.6 staffs knew this, perhaps thought that otherwise there was no bar on their activities, and so went ahead without further reference to the Foreign Office. The matter was still being investigated and "C" would provide a note of the findings. Though there was no question that the April, 1956, operation was one needing Foreign Office clearance, which had been duly sought, the October, 1955, operation was a more borderline case.

V.C.S.S. gave his recollection of his exchanges with F.O.A. subsequent to the failure of the operation on the issue of its clearance. He said that either on the evening of the 19th April or early on the next day, F.O.A. had raised the matter of clearances and he had told F.O.A. that he (F.O.A.) had cleared it. F.O.A. had replied that he had not signed the papers, that they had not been left with him and that he had not looked beyond the first page. In discussing the matter again in his office with F.O.A. about three days afterwards, C.V.S.S. had said he was sorry if F.O.A. thought the approach had been too casual; later, the papers were discussed with F.O.A. and he saw them, and again much later they were sent to him.

Questioned whether the approach had not, in fact, been too informal, given the occasion, and whether a more specific approach for the consent of the F.O.A. in writing would not have been more appropriate, V.C.S.S.

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said that there had not been many occasions for formal clearances during the term of the present F.O.A.; the practice was first to discuss the project with the F.O.A. and if he (F.O.A.) thought it should go higher he would, in conjunction with M.I.6, prepare the written submission which he himself would send to the Foreign Office. F.O.A. was always at liberty to retain M.I.6 papers for study and to discuss them with the various Foreign Office departments. There was no ruling that the F.O.A. should be asked for clearance in writing and generally, for obvious reasons, less was put on paper in the organisation than might be the case elsewhere.

Referring to the question put to him on 11th May whether there had been any specific instructions to go ahead with the operation when it was reported that clearance had been given, "C" said that on looking further into the matter it was clear that none would have been given, since everything was already poised for action as soon as clearance was forthcoming.

"C" tabled a statement indicating the arrangements for the control of the operation and the relations between Mr. D. and Mr. S. He explained that it was the responsibility of Mr. D. to check the details prepared by Mr. S.

"C" said that he had broadly no objection to his statement on errors in trade craft being included in the report.

Referring to the suggestions for more reference to, and increased surveillance by, Ministers in the case of intelligence operations, "C" said that it should be realised that Ministers had never hitherto wished to enter significantly into the affairs of his organisation. Put shortly, M.I.6 had to do unpleasant things and regarded it as their job to get them done as best they could. The point could be put in a longer way.

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M.I.6. had to carry out very many risky operations, balancing value against risk and against political embarrassment. He regarded it as his job, and that of his subordinates, to balance these factors, but to obtain political clearance where the risk of political embarrassment appeared great.

'C' and V.C.S.S. withdrew at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. D. and Mr. S. attended at 4.45 p.m.

Mr. D. had been employed in M.I.6 since during the war and Mr. S. since 1950. They were shown the Prime Minister's minute covering the investigation. Sir Edward Bridges said that although it was not a matter on which he had been asked directly to report, he would have to take into account the manner in which the operation had been carried out.

Both men agreed that it would be fair to report that mistakes, for which responsibility lay between them, had been made over "unattributability" and in the lack of a cover plan. In defence they argued that it would in any case have been difficult to disguise Commander Crabb's presence in Portsmouth and that it could only have been explained as a casual visit perhaps to seek orders from his naval acquaintances for furniture from his firm. As for allowing Commander Crabb to wander around Portsmouth, it was explained that the original intention had been to carry out the operation on the morning of the 18th April as the Russian ships arrived; however, the security precautions in the Dockyard ruled out all chance of doing the job at this time without detection and it had therefore to be postponed until the following day. Their opinion of Commander Crabb's personality was at variance with that suggested by the subsequent Press reports. They had judged him as a rather secretive and absolutely trustworthy person. Looking back,

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the choice of Commander Crabb may have been unsuitable. Mr. D. added that if Commander Crabb had obeyed instructions he would not have been where the Russians said they saw him. However, they both agreed that arrangements should have been made for a cover plan in the event of Commander Crabb's failing to return and that this was not done.

Mr. S. had had to decide on the method of his approach to Commander Crabb and on the precautions, if any, to take against recognition. He had decided that the purchase of furniture from Commander Crabb's firm would provide a normal relationship for their connection and that the use of his own name both in this respect and when signing the register would stop curiosity if, while with Commander Crabb, he had met people that he knew. As it happened, he had seen but managed to avoid a friend of his in Portsmouth. He now agreed that he had taken the wrong course in using his own name and address.

Mr. D. said that the question of canvas did not arise until Commander Crabb suggested that better screening arrangements were desirable. There had been canvas in the boat on the October, 1955, occasion but not this time. It had not been difficult to procure canvas, however, and he did not think there had been any risk in the method adopted. As regards the removal of the pages from the hotel register, it was still his opinion that they could not have been left there.

Mr. D. and Mr. S. withdrew at 5.15 p.m.

F.O.A. was recalled for further examination at 5.30 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges said that on reading the M.I.6 minute which had been left with him that morning he was bound to say that it laid greater emphasis on the matter of clearances and the position in this respect than he had previously understood. It seemed to him

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that the only inference to be drawn was that the minute was wholly concerned with clearances and that F.O.A. was open to blame if he had not acquainted himself of the position in this respect.

F.O.A. said that when the paper was brought to him by C.W.E. the latter did not ask for clearance; at no time did they discuss operations against Soviet warships. C.W.E. made no attempt to explain the details and C.W.E. must have known that F.O.A. was not aware of them and moreover had not asked for them as was F.O.A.'s usual custom when dealing with clearances. While agreeing that he must have read the covering minute F.O.A. said that he did not read the papers behind and that he was not asked nor did he have the impression that he was being asked, to clear the operation. His understanding was that the minute was going to 'C' and that it was merely being shown to him for information. It was quite wrong for C.W.E. to have left thinking that he had cleared the operation with F.O.A. It did not occur to F.O.A. to follow its progress since the practice was for M.I.6 to ask only for clearance for those operations for which they thought it necessary.

F.O.A. explained that his father's funeral had taken place the next day. He had been worried by family matters for some weeks but he would not suggest that these had any influence on the present affair.

F.O.A. agreed that the procedure adopted between M.I.6 and the F.O.A. in obtaining clearance had been on the whole informal. Cases referred to the F.O.A. would not necessarily be minuted or or initialled by him. In some cases the S.I.S. officer would record their agreement on the papers.

Sir Edward Bridges then informed F.O.A. that whereas that morning F.O.A. had said that he could not recall when he was told

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that he had been thought by M.I.6 to have cleared the operation, the V.C.S.S. had said that he himself had told F.O.A. this on either the 19th or 20th April, had referred to the matter again about three days later and subsequently had sent the papers for F.O.A. to see.

F.O.A. said that he now recollected that these conversations had taken place but said that he could not remember the dates. He thought that it might have been ten days before he saw the papers.

When asked if and on what date he had informed his superiors in the Foreign Office of the M.I.6 impression that he had cleared the operation, F.O.A. said that he did not think that he had done so. It had not come out until the 8th May when Sir Norman Brook made his report.

[In his letter of 15th May F.O.A. said that he had no comment on the record of this discussion.]

F.O.A. and C.W.E. were recalled for further examination on Wednesday, 16th May, at 3.30 p.m. In going over again the procedure for obtaining political clearance F.O.A. agreed that

(a) there was no set procedure and that it was mostly done informally. It was not usual for there to be oral consultation without F.O.A. being shown the papers.

If it was necessary for him to see the papers however the reference to him would generally be by minute.

(b) The decision given by F.O.A. would more often than not be recorded subsequently by the M.I.6 officer concerned. If the request for clearance came from "C" himself F.O.A. would reply by minute and he would also usually reply by minute in cases on which he had decided to consult the Foreign Office.

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(c) the number of intelligence operations of this kind put to F.O.A. was small, not more than one or two a month.

C.W.E. agreed that he himself had taken up about half a dozen operational clearances from his area with F.O.A. during the last year.

(d) the informal procedure of clearing papers without a written minute lent itself to a practice in which all the details of the cases were not discussed, This might save time and also avoid putting too much on paper about secret operations, but it could lead to a practice in which corners were cut, with some risk on the one side of inadequate consideration and on the other of a temptation to give less detail. F.O.A. agreed that it was best that the record of the clearance of an operation should be written by him on the relevant paper. He would welcome such a practice in future. C.W.E. thought that there would be no mechanical difficulty in this from M.I.6's point of view. C.W.E. said that M.I.6 officers did not in any way attempt to conceal things from F.O.A.; such action would be contrary to the tenets of the organisation.

The events on 10th April were then gone over again with reference to a letter (attached) dated 15th May from F.O.A. to Sir Edward Bridges of which C.W.E. had seen a copy.

F.O.A. said that he had nothing to add to his letter; he insisted that his impression at the time had been that he was being shown the minute for information only and that he had not understood that he was being asked for clearance. He agreed however that the circumstances of the conversation were no different than in most cases when his authority was being sought. In reply to certain questions by

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Sir Edward Bridges he could not recall that he had given any thought to further possible action on clearances either by M.I.6 or by himself nor could he recollect what he had said to C.W.E. at the close of their conversation.

C.W.E. said that his recollection was that he had told F.O.A. that the minute contained particulars of projected operations, with fuller details in the papers attached, and that he would like to know if F.O.A. had any objection. He was not certain whether he himself had made a specific reference to the warships operation other than to reply to the question asked by F.O.A. whether it had been agreed with Admiralty. He agreed that most of the conversation was taken up with the telephone operations.

Asked by Sir Edward Bridges why clearance was sought for the warships operation if it was not thought risky, C.W.E. said he had been instructed to clear all the operations with F.O.A. Looking back he felt that if F.O.A. had been told that the operation might be risky, F.O.A. would have enquired more about its detail; he himself gave no indication that there was any risk - his view had indeed been that there was virtually none, but he had not stressed this - and he had therefore not been particularly surprised when the F.O.A. made no comment on it.

C.W.E. withdrew at 4.20 p.m.

Sir Edward Bridges then put it to F.O.A. that whatever had been the cause of the misunderstanding between C.W.E. and himself, one of the first things he should have done, when the matter was brought to light, was to inform his superiors about it. This would have been the normal reaction of a person in his position and if he had done so there would not have occurred the unfortunate delay in telling

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Ministers.

F.O.A. referred to the explanation of the point given in his letter of 15th May to Sir Edward Bridges and said that he must ask that it should be believed.

F.O.A. withdrew at 4.30 p.m.

[In his letter of 17th May F.O.A. said that he had no amendments to suggest to the record of this interview.]

Rear Admiral Inglis was called in to give further evidence at 6.20 p.m. on Thursday, 17th May.

Sir Edward Bridges said that there was one further point which had not been covered specifically in earlier evidence. The CLARET operation had been turned down by the Prime Minister, but news of this did not reach M.I.6. If the Crabb operation had been put up to the Foreign Office through F.O.A. they would have remembered the decision on CLARET and related the two proposals. N.I.D. knew that the CLARET operation had been cancelled and that M.I.6. were preparing an operation against the Russian warships. Should they not have drawn attention to the point?

Before inviting Admiral Inglis to reply Sir Edward Bridges read over the relevant passages of his earlier evidence (page 6.)

Admiral Inglis said that, although it was not at his instigation the Admiralty had, as a matter of routine, through their Military Branch,

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told the Foreign Office that CLARET had been cancelled (see footnote *).
He had not known of this at the time.

Sir Edward Bridges asked whether it had occurred to Admiral Inglis that M.I.6 ought to have been informed about this and, if it had occurred to him, what would his reaction have been. Admiral Inglis replied that it had not occurred to him and that in any case he would have regarded it as entirely the business of M.I.6 and would have assumed that they would be getting authority. Their position was quite different and different criteria applied to their activities. (Admiral Inglis added that in retrospect it seemed to him that the fundamental error was to have employed a man with the title of Commander to carry out this operation in a naval dockyard. This made it impossible to dissociate the Admiralty from the operation when it came to light. If he had been called Mr. Crabb or a civil dockyard had been in question there would have been no difficulty.)

* [In a telephone conversation with Mr. Darracott on the morning of Friday 18th May, Sir John Lang explained that the Admiralty had put their proposal to mount operation CLARET to the Foreign Office at the official level through Military Branch who were informed by the P.U.S.'s Department that the Foreign Secretary was in accord with the proposal. The First Lord's submission to the Prime Minister was not then copied to the Foreign Secretary.

When the Prime Minister rejected the proposal, the Military Branch telephoned the P.U.S.'s Department, told them of the Prime Minister's decision and read them his minute.]

E.R.

COPY

SPECIAL

MINUTE SHEET

Source R.O.S.
 No. 493
 Date 10.4.56.

DISTRIBUTION
 (Addressees to
 initial and date
 before passing)

Visit of BULGANIN and KHRUSHCHEV

1. I understand from SO/V.C.S.S. that you have agreed C.W.E.
 to deal with any clearances required for action by us
 during the B and K visit. It is important that we have
 any clearances that are required as soon as possible
 so that we can plan the details. Copy: D/C.N.E.
 D/C.N.E.

2. The present situation is as follows:- R.O.S.

(a) Microphones in CLARIDGE's: F.O. clearance C.W.E.
obtained by M.I.5.

(b) Telephone tapping: No requests for special
telephone facilities have yet been made. If
they are made and we wish to tap them, F.O.
clearance will be necessary. Para. 2(a). We
 spoke about this.
 Will you please
 explain to F.O.A.
 the restriction
 on discussion of
 this? This now
 virtually under
 ours, and not
 M.I.5's control.

(c) Soviet warships: Agreement reached with
 N.I.D. on subdivision of responsibilities
 between N.I.D. and S.I.S. N.I.D. have given
blessing to our plans and promised all
facilities. We have not so far informed the
 F.O. of our plans in this respect. P

(d) Soviet Aircraft: Our plans are being co-ordinated 11/4
 with the Air Ministry through R.2. F.O.
 clearance has not so far been requested.

(e) Interpreters: Full agreement has been reached
with the F.O. on the briefing of interpreters.

(f) Car Microphones: It has been decided to drop
this operational method.

(g) Observation of Soviet Microphone Detection
 Methods: Responsibility for action accepted by
M.I.5.

(Liakhovsky)

(h) Use of R.O.S./1 as interpreter to ZAKHAROV:
Cleared by you with F.O.A. and in detail by me
with the F.O.

3. SO/W.C.S.S. has asked that V.C.S.S. should be
 informed on the clearance situation on his return on
 Friday.

Friday R.O.S.
 10.4.56. 1. I have cleared 2(c) and (d) with F.O.A.

E.R.

DISTRIBUTION
ACTION TAKEN

2. F.O.A. notes that if any telephone tapping is indulged in F.O. clearance will have to be obtained.

2. I will take these up with C.S.S. - but you should go ahead with the planning.

C.W.E. 10/4

E.R.

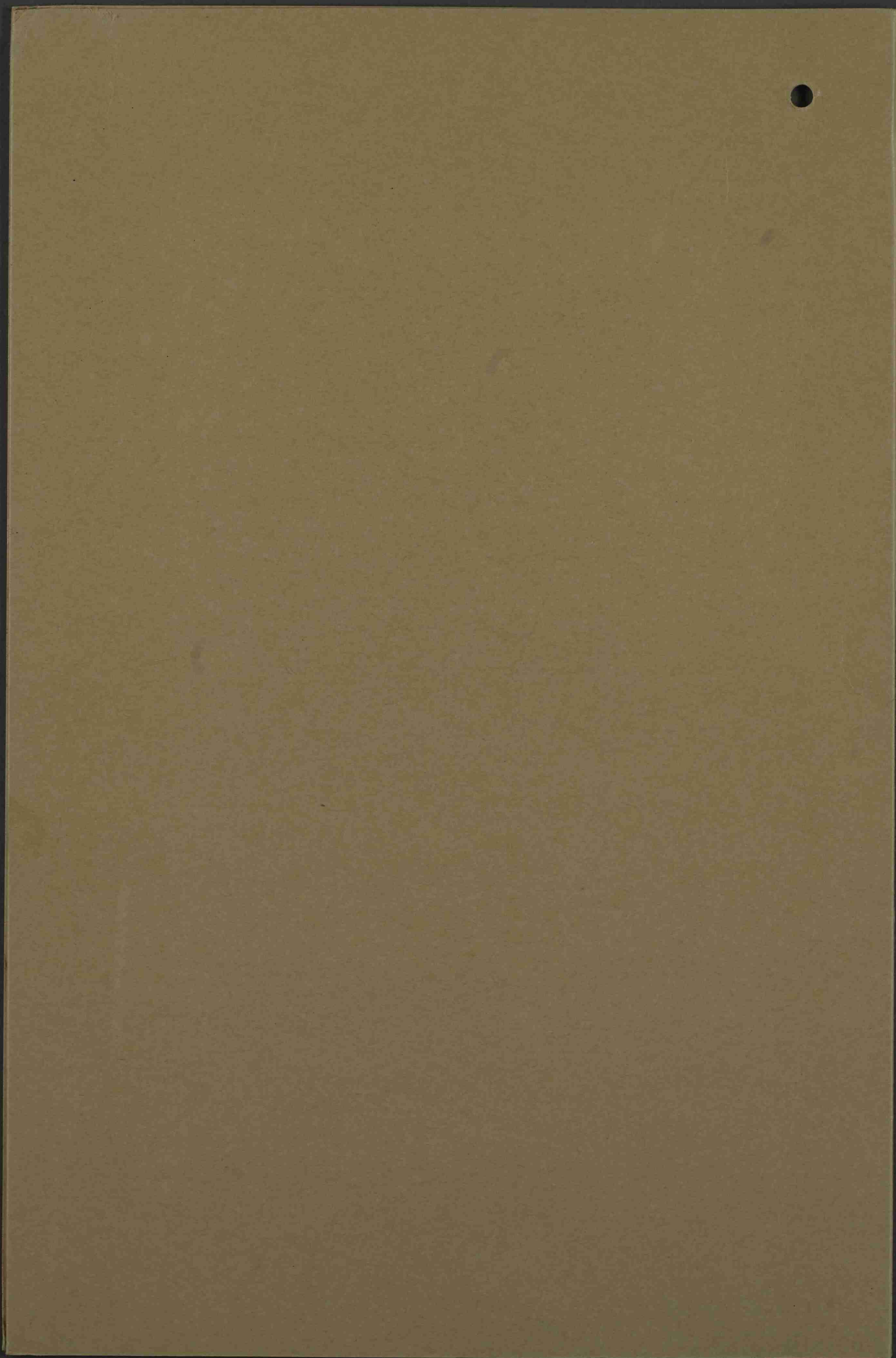
COPY

File No . Current S.1

MINUTE SHEETCLEARANCES FOR OPS DURING RUSSIAN VISITDISTRIBUTION
(Addressees to
initial and date
before passing)

1. There is a very brief account of the planned operation for the Russian visitors. Clearance has now been obtained for all these operations. C.S.S.
2. I am satisfied that D/CNE and ROS have got their arrangements well in hand. Indeed the ROS note of executive coordinator has worked very well. J.W.E.
3. I shall be on leave during the visit. I would suggest that on Monday, 23 April, you see D/CNE during my weekly period. He will tell you how everything is going.
4. I will see that V.C.S.S. is put fully in the picture next week.

C.W.E. 11/4



CAB 301/124

(4)

FROGMAN: The Bridges Enquiry into the disappearance
of Commander Crabb: supplementary statements

THE FROGMAN CASE

From 'C'

DIARY OF EVENTS WITH SOME EXPLANATORY NOTES

APPENDIX "A" : CASE HISTORY

APPENDIX "B" : SOME DETAILS OF CRABB'S
FRIENDS AND RELATIONS

APPENDIX "C" : BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACTION
TAKEN UP TO 28th APRIL

Note on clearance for the SVERDLOV operation.

From DNI.

Comments of 11/5/56 on 'C' report

Captain Tanell's report

Soviet procurement effort at Leningrad, October
1955.

Returned temporarily
to D.N.I.

✓ 25/10/56.

Returned to
Cadmium Office
✓ 1/2/57.

Narrative

Wednesday 25th April. All times approximate. BSF

1600 Sent for by DNI ^{via VCNS}. Met in his office
 DNI, ^{plus Secretaries} Captain Moon & representative of M16. The
 circumstances attending the loss of Commander Crabbe
 were explained to me & the necessity of preventing
 the story appearing in the press before the departure
 of the Soviet ships. Crabbe's partner ^(x employee) Maitland Pendock
 was identified as the main risk as he was already
 making enquiries.

1730. Having telephoned Pendock's business address I
 went there and in due course he arrived.
 I took him to my flat in Dorset House & over
 some whisky I broke the news that Crabbe
 had been lost while doing trials of secret
 underwater apparatus for the Admiralty. He gave
 me a list of the people with whom he had been
 in contact in his search for news. I impressed
 him with the importance of keeping the thing
 quiet until the rest of his head was informed.
 He undertook to re-assure the people he might
 have alerted. One of his reactions was that
 Crabbe might have committed suicide.
 He gave me the name of Mr. HONNIBAL, Crabbe's
 cousin & close friend.

I then attended a conference in Broadway.
and reported my interview with Pendock.

17



Thursday 26th April.

Marshall Pugh, Crabbe's biographer got into touch with me via Pendock with whom he was 1730. acquainted. I accordingly got him to my flat and told him the same story as Pendock and again asked for his silence until after word of him had been informed. He readily agreed to cooperate. I undertook to tell him first as soon as there was an Admiralty statement. I then reported the proceedings to DNI.

It was agreed that



Friday 27th April.


It was decided that I should go to
TOWERSEY (Oxfordshire) and break the news
of Crabbs' death to his mother who, it was
presumed, was his next of kin.

1500. I called on Mr. HONNIBAL Crabbs' cousin
and invited him to telephone and warn
1630 the household of our visit. We set out
by car and reached Mrs Crabbs about
1800. I told her ~~that~~^{the} same story that
I had told Pendock & Marshall-Pugh.

2000 On my return about 2000 I saw DNT
and learnt that there was now an
approved Admiralty statement although
no announcement was to be made.

2400. I telephoned Marshall-Pugh the news
that there was now an Admiralty statement
although there would be no release &
the Admiralty still wished the minimum
of publicity.





Saturday 28th April

1030. After conferring with D.V.I. I set out for St Margaret - at - Cliffe (Dover) to see Crabb's ex-wife and to verify by her statement that she ~~was~~ ^{had} in fact finally divorced him.

1300. I reached Mrs Crabb who lives under the name of Mrs Plange (that of her first husband) and told her of Crabb's death in the same terms as before. She had one reaction which surprised me: she suggested the possibility that he had deliberately disappeared in order to evade his creditors and an impossible burden of debt. I told her that this seemed impossible.

1800. Reached Captain Moore's house at Uckfield. Discussed the situation with him.



Sunday 29th April

2300. On return to London found a
 telephone message from Marshall Pugh.
 I thereupon telephoned him and learnt
 that the press was on to the story and that
 he had given ~~them~~ ^{each} paper an obituary notice.
 &

Monday 30th April

0930 Conferred with DX1 and wrote a less extensive
 from the proceedings.

Mon

Wednesday 9th April

1500 On instructions from DX1 I got into touch
 with Mr Hounibal once more, collected
 him by car and ^{with him} returned Crab's effects
 to his mother + next of kin Mrs Crab.

Mr. Mitchell

I should be grateful if you would confirm sometime at your leisure that you are still holding two documents which were taken from one of the files "C" brought to his first meeting with Sir Edward Bridges on the 11th May. They are:

✓ (i) a note on "Visit to Leningrad" (Oct., 1955); and

✓ (ii) a minute by C.W.E. to ~~F.O.A.~~ (flag "A") this was not returned when the other two "flags", D. and E. from the same document came back to the office from you on 15th May.

V.C.S.S. was asked about (ii) on Friday afternoon. On re checking the file the 'missing' document was located. It was a report from C.W.E. to V.C.S.S. and not a minute to F.O.A. It was *to Edward* "C" Secretary. 18.5.56.

W. R. Darnall
23/5/56

TOP SECRETAND PERSONAL

C/9544.

LONDON,

15th May, 1956.

Dear Bridges.

The way the frogman incident has hit the headlines has no doubt made the public, and perhaps some official opinion, feel that it is an extraordinary type of operation and particularly delicate. For your own background, I felt, therefore, that it might be useful to let you have the attached note which gives some idea of the scope and nature of our activities and delicate operations which could cause political embarrassment if they went wrong. The attached paper does not attempt to be exhaustive, but I hope you will agree that if the frogman incident is viewed against this general background, the true significance of its risk in relation to the wider pattern gets into better focus.

I would like the enclosed paper to be returned to me as it is obviously one where the details should not go on record, and if you wish to make any reference in your report to this matter of perspective, it would be as well to generalise rather than refer to any of the particular operations which are mentioned.

*Yours sincerely,**C.**Enclosure returned**DM 18/5-*

The Right Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.

Telephone,
Whitehall 1234.



Treasury Chambers,
Great George Street,
S.W.1.

To

Mr D. J. Mitchell
Treasury Chambers,
Great George St, S.W.1.

Received one memorandum
ref. C/9544.

H. Edwards
18.5.56.

18th May, 1956

Handed in by DNI. 10.30am. 14th May.

*Exempt from
ref*

VISIT TO LENINGRAD

October, 1955

SOVIET PROCUREMENT EFFORT

1. The Soviet authorities made an extensive effort to procure intelligence. It was obvious that most of the visitors had been specially selected by the Russians and were naval personnel or technicians who had been briefed to obtain intelligence on our ships.

2. The visitors jumped in and out of boats and up and down ladders with a professional agility and complained bitterly that they had not been allowed to see various compartments which would not have interested the casual visitor.

Many visitors would disclaim any knowledge of English but would suddenly come out with questions such as "How is your Squid stabilised?", "What is the calibre of your guns?".

3. Following Soviet procurement activities were observed on all ships:

- a) Tally plates, were read thoroughly by people who said that they could not speak English.
- b) Constant efforts were made to break away from conducted parties.
- c) Several men visited the ships at least three times, being recognised by guides who had previously shown them round.
- d) Small boys would be sent in under spaces inaccessible to adults; on coming out they would pass on their observations to their sponsors.
- e) Cases occurred in which ratings found themselves in company of obviously planted informants.

4. The following more specific examples were observed:

- a) A visitor to the DIANA had a paper parcel under his arm. From watching him it became obvious that this contained a camera. The camera was found, the film extracted and the camera returned.
- b) At least three of the Soviet liaison officers were known by an N.I.D. officer to have been engaged on intelligence work in 1948/1950.
- c) A Soviet ship constructor, known to a N.I.D. officer, was observed in plain clothes examining a destroyer's rivets and frame distances.
- d) A constructor Major with seven of his cadets were allowed on board the TRIUMPH and spent most of the afternoon trying to evade their guides.
- e) Attempted pumping of the ratings visiting Moscow on whether or not the DARING's turrets were power operated, and on the performance of the Squid.

/...

- 2 -

- f) A visitor on board one of the destroyers spent a large amount of time inspecting the main and auxiliary machinery mountings and asked a number of questions about resilient mountings.
- g) A visitor on board one of the destroyers spent a large amount of time inspecting the gyro and magnetic compass and asking questions about degaussing coils.
- h) A visitor on board the APOLLO was seen to be counting the number of bottlescrew slips for securing mines.
- i) A visitor on board one of the destroyers examined and took the number of all padlocks on upper deck watertight doors.
- j) An attempt was made on board one of the destroyers to photograph the radar aerials.
- k) It appeared that the hydrographic vessel G.601, which was anchored off the channel on the inward and outward passage, was fitted with hydrophones and was possibly taking a revolution/speed count.
- l) The Soviet destroyer ODARYENNY, which escorted the Home Fleet in and out of Leningrad, was well equipped with intercept aerials.

**TOP SECRET****PERSONAL**

Sir Edward Bridges

I enclose a copy of some proposed amendments to C's report on the frogman case. While I agree generally with the report I think that these amendments help to describe the circumstances more accurately.

I am sending a copy to 'C'.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. J. Ingles'.

Director of Naval Intelligence.
11th May, 1956.

*Two copies received
are destroyed*

17/5/56

TOP SECRET**PERSONAL**

TOP SECRET**PERSONAL**D.N.I.'s proposed amendments to Report on
Frogman CaseAppendix A, para. 2 For 1954 read 1955para. 6 - add

"On 17th April S.I.S. had approached N.I.D. to ask for the name of an officer to assist Crabb on diving matters. On the understanding that:-

- (a) he would be approached privately and unofficially by M.I.6.
- (b) his role would be limited to giving advice and playing a passave part.
- (c) that on no account whatsoever was he to be asked to dive.

Lieut. Commander Franklin's name and home address was given".

para. 12 - Delete para. 3 and substitute:-

"After a short conference they returned to the N.I.D. office in the Dockyard. They informed Head office and Commander Forbes".

Diary of Eventspara. 1(b) - Delete and substitute:-

"(b) The S.I.S. consulted the brief supplied to them by N.I.D. in December, 1954, showing exactly what their requirements for inspection were".

(c) Delete and substitute:-

"When it was learnt in mid March that Bulganin and Krushchev were taking passage to Portsmouth in a cruiser, a meeting was held between S.I.S. and N.I.D. to discuss the division of labour.

It was recorded at this meeting that certain operations were to be undertaken by S.I.S. These included a frogman operation. It was also recorded that the Admiralty would give unofficial assistance to M.I.6 for all these operations. It is normal practice for N.I.D. to give any reasonable assistance they can to S.I.S. for their operations.

As a result of the various meetings that had been held, there was never any doubt in/

TOP SECRET**PERSONAL**

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL

- 2 -

in our minds that the Admiralty set store by the frogman operations and wished us to carry them out on their behalf. Underwater noise characteristics, one method of assessing which is done by frogman operations, is top of the Admiralty list of requirements in PIRDAR (NID's standing requirements to all intelligence agencies).

Annex 1Tuesday, 17th April

- (a) Delete first sentence and substitute:-

"Davies arrived at Portsmouth, where arrangements were made for him to have access to N.I.D's office in the Dockyard (Commander Forbes)".

Thursday, 19th April

- (i) Delete last sentence and substitute:-

"Forbes arranged a boat to assist in the search in which ... ~~stet~~ ...

- (n) Delete inside brackets and substitute:-

"(who had been informed by his liaison Head Office)".

Tuesday, 24th April

- (b) Last sentence - after "finally" insert:-

"it was likely to be assumed that".

Wednesday, 25th April

- (a)(ii) Amend to read:-

"It was mutually agreed that if submitted to higher authority in one department it should be submitted to the corresponding authority in other departments concerned".

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL

May 15, 1956

Clearance for the SVERDLOV Operation

Before the October visit of the SVERDLOV, S.I.S. was asked at the working level to consider the employment of a frogman since the Admiralty had placed an embargo on the Navy using its own.

It was on this occasion that the Admiralty provided a list of names, from which the name of Commander CRABB was chosen. Prior to this Russian naval visit, there had been an interdepartmental meeting, in which the Foreign Office were included, to discuss the question of possible Russian defectors. The decision of this meeting was that there must be no direct provocation of Russian sailors to defect. The officer responsible for planning S.I.S. participation in operations connected with the SVERDLOV visit interpreted this decision as meaning there should be no provocation of defectors or direct recruitment of Russians as agents, but otherwise no holds were barred. In consequence he did not submit to higher authority in S.I.S. his proposed list of operations to be undertaken at Portsmouth and no action was therefore taken to seek Foreign Office clearance on this occasion. Neither I nor my Vice Chief had been informed of the intended operations. Had we been, it is most probable we should have taken parallel action on the question of clearance to that taken in the recent case. The circumstances were, however, more borderline in that the naval visit was not directly connected with a diplomatic visit and was purely a naval occasion.

THE FROGMAN CASEDiary of Events and some Explanatory NotesThe Inception of the Operation

1. (a) On 22nd February 1956 a meeting was held at the Admiralty to discuss the Russian naval visits to Western ports. On the Admiralty side Captain GRAHAM, A/D.N.I.(W) and Commander FORBES were present, supported by the then A/D.N.I.(F) working in S.I.S. Headquarters. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a considerable variety of ways in which intelligence might be obtained during the Russian visits, and to decide on the exact division between overt and covert activities and hence which operations should be under D.N.I. and which under 'C'. Included among the S.I.S. responsibilities were operations involving the use of frogmen at home and abroad.

(b) Shortly after this meeting S.I.S. received a copy of the brief supplied by the Admiralty showing exactly what it was that they wanted frogmen to achieve on their behalf.

(c) In about mid-March, DAVIES, an experienced S.I.S. Officer attended a meeting at the Admiralty accompanied by another of the Admiralty Officers who work in S.I.S. Headquarters. As a result of this meeting, S.I.S. was given a Minute affirming the conclusions reached at the Admiralty meeting and specifically mentioning the use of frogmen at Portsmouth. As regards the employment of frogmen, it was stated that the Admiralty were ready to give their unofficial facilities.

As a result of the various meetings that had been held, there was never any doubt in our minds that the Admiralty set store by the frogmen operations and wished us to carry them out on their behalf. The exact requirement comes top of the Admiralty list of requirements.

/Clearance ...

- 2 -

Clearance for the Operation (see Annex 1)

2. S.I.S. were fully aware of the need to obtain clearance for operations during the Russian visit.

The provisional list of proposed operations, of which CRABB's was one, was drawn up and first shown to V.C.S.S. who vetoed one of them. When the list was finalised and the operations worked out in sufficient detail, a Senior Officer was told to obtain clearance from the Foreign Office Adviser. There seems to have been a misunderstanding between the two officers, one feeling that he had obtained complete clearance for the operations; the other not being aware of the details of the operations nor of the proposed one of the frogman.

The S.I.S. Officer concerned minuted 'C' that he had "cleared 2(c) and 2(d) with FOA" and that "FOA notes that if any telephone tapping (2(b)) is indulged in, F.O. clearance will have to be obtained". - (2(c) was headed "Soviet Warships" and 2(d) "Soviet Aircraft") - 'C' also read in this Minute that 2(a) - the Claridges Operation - had been cleared by M.I.5. with the Foreign Office (it was subsequently turned down by the Prime Minister) and that 2(e) Interpreters had received agreement "with the Foreign Office on the briefing of interpreters". The combination of these factors led him to the conclusion that further clearance was not necessary for the frogman or the aircraft operations, neither of which were considered to carry, practically speaking, any risk at all. He knew the value the Admiralty attached to the information the former should produce. Perhaps, also, the thorough "going through" of our Ships in Leningrad was a further factor.

The Choice of CRABB

3. The conclusion had been reached that the only way of meeting certain of the Admiralty requirements in respect of the Russian cruiser was to employ frogmen. At the time in question - October 1955 - one of the Admiralty Officers attached

/to ...

- 3 -

to S.I.S. offered to find out from the Admiralty the names of ex-Naval frogmen. As a result of his researches in the Admiralty the conclusion was reached that CRABB was the most suitable man for the job.

Annex 1CLEARANCES OF DELICATE OPERATIONSWITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE

Guidance for the procedure for obtaining Foreign Office approval for delicate operations is contained in a number of different instructions, each tending to deal with particular aspects of the problem. There is no doubt that the procedure and practice is fully understood. Broadly, delicate operations are those which come into the category liable to produce the most serious embarrassment if they misfire, that is to say, they could be readily traced directly to British official action. Those responsible for conducting operations are aware that they should obtain clearance for these operations by a primary approach to FOA/CSS or his assistant, and it is the responsibility of FOA/CSS to decide whether he can give his own approval or submit it to higher authority within his Department. Depending on the nature of the operation, submissions can be by a direct personal approach, verbally supported with papers if necessary, or a formal approach in writing for those cases which at first sight would appear to need reference to higher authority than FOA/CSS himself.

2. The practice is that when FOA/CSS decides that the submission must be formal and possibly go to the Permanent Under Secretary of State level, V.C.S.S. and/or C.S.S. is consulted to ascertain whether they would be prepared to pursue the request for clearance. Standing orders laid down some time ago make it clear to Controllers that they should either make their submissions for clearances to FOA/CSS through R.P.1 (now styled SO/VCSS) or keep him informed by sending him a copy of written requests or any information on informal verbal requests which they may make to FOA/CSS.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
<u>Tuesday, 17th April</u>	<p>a) DAVIES arrived at Portsmouth and established joint office with N.I.D. (FORBES) in the Dockyard and also a separate office with Portsmouth Police at Central Police Station. He saw the Chief Constable and Chief Superintendent LAMPART who knew that some project was afoot but NOT what it was.</p> <p>b) SMITH and CRABB arrived on evening of 17th and DAVIES met them at Keppel's Head Hotel.</p> <p>c) DAVIES later took a room at the Gloucester Hotel while CRABB and SMITH went to the Sallyport.</p> <p>d) After obtaining rooms CRABB telephoned Lieut. Commander FRANKLIN of VERNON. (CRABB knew him). FRANKLIN was required as a helper in the operation but was not then aware of it.</p>
<u>WEDNESDAY, 18th April</u>	<p>a) Russian ships anchored at Portsmouth.</p> <p>b) DAVIES reconnoitred area and layout of boats and ships with CRABB, FRANKLIN and SMITH.</p> <p>c) A first dive was carried out in the early evening. After 30 minutes CRABB was in good condition but needed an alteration to his gear. His dive ended short of the Russian ships and underneath the jetty.</p>
<u>Thursday, 19th April</u>	<p>a) SMITH and CRABB left hotel at 0545 and picked up FRANKLIN.</p> <p>b) CRABB dived at 0650 hours with SMITH and FRANKLIN in attendance.</p> <p>c) Oxygen supply was estimated to be sufficient for 2 hours for a skilful diver.</p> <p>d) It was not considered that the operation, which was confined to an examination of the rudder and screws of the cruiser, would take more than one hour to complete (including return to boat from which he started).</p> <p>e) SMITH and FRANKLIN expected CRABB back by 0800</p>

hours: and began seriously to worry at 0830 hours.

f) By 0900 hours they realised either that the worst had happened or that CRABB had been forced to "hole up" somewhere.

g) SMITH and FRANKLIN searched immediate vicinity including the piles under the jetty and the pontoon area (see diagram in full report).

h) At 0950 SMITH telephoned DAVIES who was then at Central Police Office. DAVIES went straight to dockyard arriving at 10 a.m. and took charge. Gear was packed up but a rope left hanging under boat (as was done in first dive) to assist CRABB to identify it and to help himself up by.

i) DAVIES then returned with FRANKLIN and SMITH to N.I.D. joint office in dockyard and reported to FORBES. FRANKLIN and SMITH went back for one more search of the jetty piles and the boat pond. FRANKLIN then returned to VERNON. Shortly after 10 a.m. DAVIES telephoned his report to London. (S.O.(I) of c-in-C's staff was also informed by FORBES and provided a motor launch in which DAVIES and SMITH made a further and more widespread search, including going outside the harbour.

j) Later in the day (time unknown) FRANKLIN felt he had to report the occurrence and did so to the Captain of VERNON who took it to C-in-C.

k) DAVIES was called to Portsmouth Police (LAMPORT) (M.I.5. had heard from S.I.S. about the catastrophe and had told LAMPORT of it). DAVIES spoke to CUMMING of M.I.5. on telephone and then told LAMPORT full story.

l) During the day (somewhere about lunchtime) SMITH returned to hotel, paid his and CRABB's bill and removed the belongings of both.

Sis
 m) Two Senior Officers arrived during day and had conferences with DAVIES, LAMPORT, SMITH and FORBES. The two S.I.S. Officers from London and FORBES returned that evening to London having arranged that Police should be immediately informed if any body was recovered from the water.

n) Meanwhile, at Head Office V.C.S. S. was informed at about 1500 hours and asked D.N.I. to come over for a meeting (the Admiralty already knew of the incident - probably from FORBES). F.O.A. was requested to inform DEAN of what had happened.

Friday, 20th April to
Monday, 23rd April

a) This was a period of fact-finding, and consideration of possible action to meet the various possible eventualities. There was continuous consultation with M.I.5. and the Admiralty representative in the office.

Sunday, 22nd April

a) We learnt about the *Chief of Staff to* ~~C-in-C's~~ dinner party of April 21st and the Russian Admiral's comment that they had seen a frogman.

Monday, 23rd April

a) C.S.S. returned from leave. (April 16th - 22nd).
 b) F.O.A. informed of the dinner party incident.
 c) KIRKPATRICK informed by Dean of the presumed loss of CRABB.

Tuesday, 24th April

a) We heard from the Admiralty that PENDOCK (CRABB's employer) had rung up a Naval officer named CRAWFORD who was CRABB's friend and on the Naval staff at Harwich but living near Portsmouth. The purpose of the call was to seek news of CRABB.

/b) ...

*Re: H.M.
 Stand and like to
 call H.M.
 Bureau now
 Unit 3143*

our say
knew him, then

b) At about this stage two major factors dominated our minds. The first was that it was of the utmost importance to keep CRABB's activities quiet until after the Russian visit was over. The second was that the ~~best~~ hope of preventing early publicity and embarrassment to H.M.G. would be for the Admiralty to assume responsibility for ^{Spew} action and admit sponsorship. Further, any cover story intended to portray the operation as a private venture on the part of CRABB would not hold water for a number of reasons including, for example, the fact that CRABB would have required assistance in preparing or dressing for the dive, and it would have looked extremely odd had his "friend" not come forward to report his loss. Finally, activities of this nature, in the Portsmouth area, and at this particular juncture, could hardly have taken place without some degree of Naval support.

c) During the day V.C.S.S. saw D.N.I. and F.O.A. and spoke to M.I.5. (CUMMING).

d) At this stage the D.N.I.'s reaction was against accepting any Admiralty responsibility for CRABB's activities.

Wednesday, 25th April

a) C.S.S. held a meeting at 11.30 with D.N.I., DG-M.I.5. and F.O.A. present. Three main conclusions emerged from the discussion. They were:-

/ (i)

*W- the water was
submitted to high authority
on 27th, it should
be submitted to high authority
all the type covered*

- (i) D.N.I. agreed to put it to V.C.N.S. that the Admiralty should assume responsibility for covering the operation.
- (ii) F.O.A. said that the Foreign Office would have to parallel any action which the Admiralty might take in raising the issue to higher levels.
- (iii) It was agreed that the top priority was to prevent the story breaking while the Russians were still in England.

- b) At 3 p.m. C.S.S. went with D.N.I., DG-M.I.5 and F.O.A. to see V.C.N.S. at the Admiralty. V.C.N.S. saw the force of the arguments and agreed that the Admiralty would have to provide cover. He also agreed that a Naval Officer should go to see PENDOCK (CRABB's employer) and find out what the situation was and try to persuade him to keep quiet. Captain SARELL was selected and he interviewed PENDOCK at 5 p.m. the same evening. SARELL reported at Head Office at 1930 hours and the results of his interview seemed to have been satisfactory. He was able to give us some valuable details regarding CRABB's family and associates.

Thursday 26th April

- a) No significant developments took place, though many consultations were held.

Friday, 27th April

- a) C.S.S. held a meeting with D.N.I., Captain SARELL, DG-M.I.5 and F.O.A. at 1030 hours. A statement was drafted which it was proposed that the Admiralty should ^{use} hold in reserve when answering any queries that might be made.
- b) During the day, the Secretary to the Admiralty was informed of the incident, and approved the draft statement. He said he would decide on Monday 30th April, whether or not to inform the First Lord.

- c) During the day SARELL informed CRABB's mother of CRABB's presumed death.
- d) The hotel register incident occurred on this day. A full account is attached. (Annex 1). SMITH had signed his correct name and address which could have led to his "notional" employment by the Foreign Office.
- e) The Russian ships left PORTSMOUTH.

Saturday 28th April

- a) SARELL interviewed CRABB's ex-wife and thought that there was no reason to fear any embarrassing action from her.

Sunday 29th April

- a) ~~The previously prepared Press statement was released by the Admiralty in the evening in answer to questions from the Press.~~ *on the basis of the brief*

Monday 30th April

- a) Press reports of the incident. But at this stage were mostly a matter of speculation.
- b) ~~The Secretary to the Admiralty decided not to put the case up to the First Lord. KIRKPATRICK was informed of this decision and agreed to hold the matter at his level, at least for the time being.~~

Tuesday 1st May

- a) Press stories continued but no hard or damaging facts were reported which could give cause for any serious alarm.

Wednesday 2nd May

- a) Late in the evening Press reporters discovered that pages had been removed from the register at the Sallyport Hotel, and the hotel proprietor and police were vigorously questioned. It was clear from this questioning that the Press were aware that CRABB

/had ...

had stayed at the hotel in company with a man named Mr. SMITH.

Thursday, 3rd May

a) The hotel register incident was given considerably publicity in the morning Press and it was clear that an all-out Press campaign was about to commence, with the identity of the mysterious Mr. SMITH as one of its central features. It was obvious that all hope of keeping the matter quiet must now be abandoned and that Ministers should be told without further delay.

(b) D.N.I. visited C.S.S. at 1500 hours and future action was discussed.

c) The First Lord was informed later in the ^{afternoon} ~~evening~~ and decided that no further statement should be put out by the Admiralty.

Dear Ld Kitting

Friday, 4th May

a) A meeting was held with Sir Norman BROOK at 1500 hours to decide the line to be taken in answering the Parliamentary Question put down by Mr. DUGDALE.

b) SMITH and his wife were moved from London to the country, where they still are.

c) During the afternoon and evening two alternative statements were drafted for submission to the Admiralty. One admitted that CRABB had been lost while engaged upon an intelligence operation against the Russian ships, and the other adhered to the original cover story that he had been engaged upon trials of secret equipment entirely unconnected with the Russian ships. These statements were put to the First Lord at 2115 hours.

Saturday, 5th May

a) Prime Minister decided not to issue either statement.

PM
G.M. Lm
2/11/45

Monday 7th May

- Reply to PS*
- a) ~~Statement~~ drafted and also answers to possible supplementaries. D.N.I. discussed this with C.S.S. in his flat late that evening.

Tuesday 8th May

- a) Conference at 1145 with D.N.I.
b) Meeting at 1445 with Sir Norman BROOK. DEAN and D.N.I. also present.

Wednesday 9th May

- a) M.I.5 informed us that Admiral THOMSON had learnt from the Daily Express that they have authentic proof from contacts in PORTSMOUTH that the operation was an "M.I.6. one".
b) C.S.S. gave instructions that the settlement of SMITH's outstanding account with PENDOCK's firm should be discussed with M.I.5. and that it should be suggested to the Admiralty that arrangements should also be made for the return of CRABB's effects by them to his next-of-kin. Action under both these heads was accordingly taken.
c) Parliamentary debate and Prime Minister's statement.

Thursday 10th May

- ~~a) Report received that GOSPORT police had found a frogman's face piece.~~

ANNEX 1THE HOTEL REGISTER

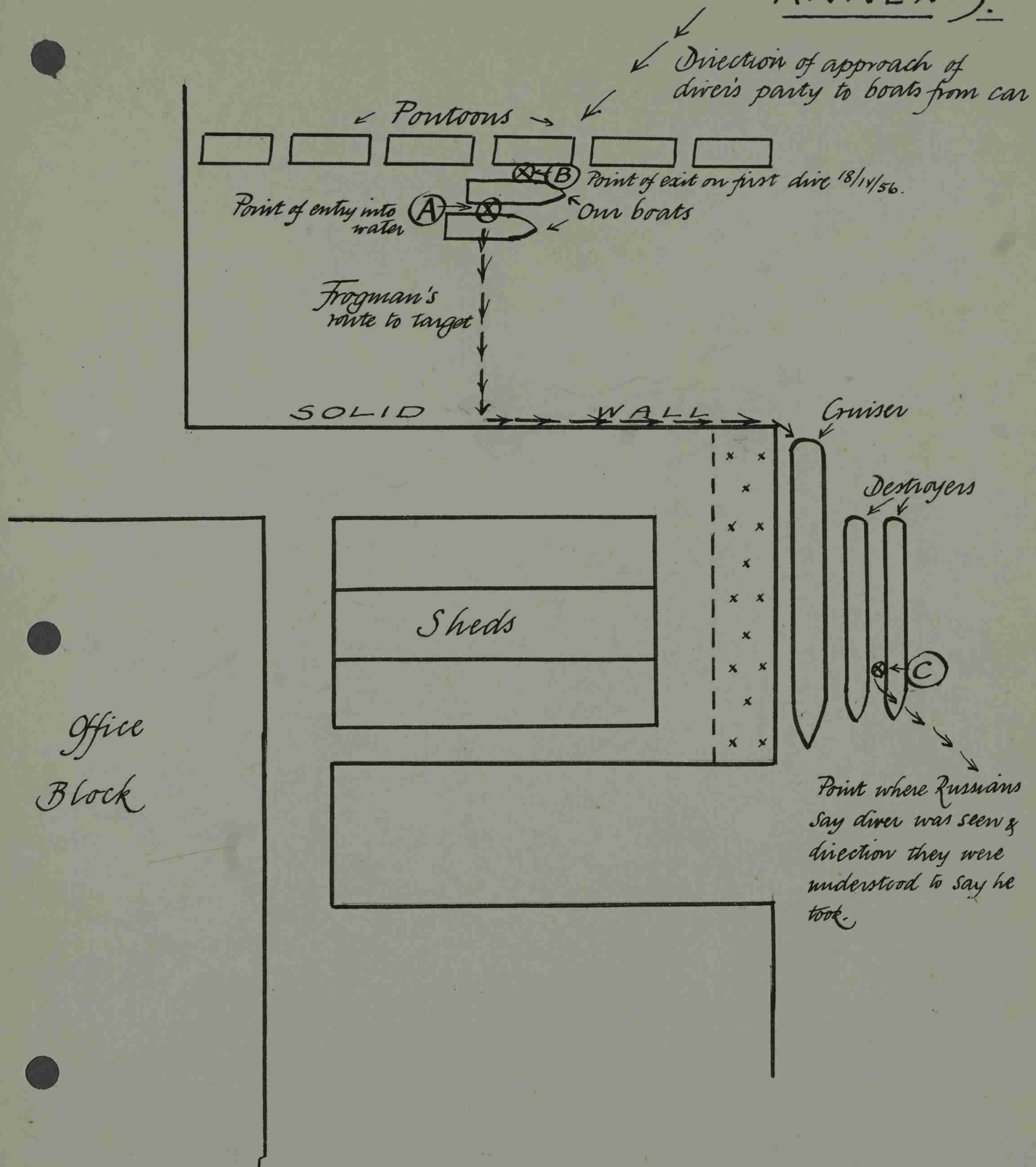
1. We learned in Head Office on 23rd April that the Hotel Register had been filled in by SMITH and CRABB with their proper names and addresses.
2. By 27th April, it had become clear that the Register was a source of danger as a possible trace back to SMITH. An S.I.S. Officer was therefore ordered to get in touch with DAVIES in PORTSMOUTH and to instruct him to consult the Chief Constable and LAMPFORT and report back what the local authorities thought it would be best to do. Some thoughts on possible alternatives were given to DAVIES as a basis for his discussion. It is important to note that no orders as to what was to be done were given from London but that the local authorities were asked to recommend back what they suggested. In this respect, it was agreed by all, including M.I.5., that action of this kind was best decided locally with the full knowledge of local conditions, local practice and the hotel proprietor who would inevitably have to be involved.
3. Later on the 27th, DAVIES rang back to say that LAMPFORT had extracted 4 pages from the Register. Action had therefore been taken without any attempt to obtain concurrence from those concerned in London. This was regrettable.
4. An M.I.5. Officer proceeded to Portsmouth later on the 27th for the purpose of discussing with LAMPFORT whether it would be best to try and put the pages back as they were, to alter the entries and then return the pages, to let the matter rest with the Register back in the hands of the hotel proprietor, less 4 pages, or to confiscate the whole Register.
5. The M.I.5. Officer returned to London on the 28th and confirmed his earlier telephone call that, after having talks with LAMPFORT, they were of the opinion that things should be left as they were.

/He further....

- 2 -

He further reported that LAMPORT had destroyed the two pages which did NOT include the CRABB and SMITH entries and that he had brought back to London with him the two pages on which the SMITH and CRABB entries were made (these pages were returned to the Chief Constable who is holding them).

6. On 7th May, M.I.5. stated at a meeting in Head Office that Portsmouth Police had not at any time contested that they were doing other than acting on their own discretion when extracting the pages from the Register. It came as a surprise to all of us to hear that they had so acted and had, apparently, interpreted the message from London as authority to act without any further consultation with London.

ANNEX 3.

A.

APPENDIX "A" : CASE HISTORYTHE FROGMAN CASE

1. Personal details of the frogman are as follows:-

Commander Lionel Kenneth Phillip CRABB,
O.B.E., G.M., R.N.V.R.

British subject, born 28 January 1909.

Profession: Ex-R.N.V.R. Special Branch, expert
in under-water work. Was concerned
with the Tobermory galleon salvage
operation.

Current occupation: Employed by Elmbourne Ltd.,
of 124, Seymour Place, London, W.1.
The owner of this firm is a friend
of 25 years standing, a certain Mr.
Maitland PENDOCK. The firm supplies
furniture for expresso coffee bars.

Next of kin: Mother, Mrs. Beatrice CRABB.

CRABB's divorce from his wife, Margaret
Elaine, was made absolute on 29.11.54,
and is registered in the Divorce Registry
at Somerset House under Serial No. 8674
of that date.

2. CRABB's association with S.I.S. commenced in the autumn
of 1954, shortly before the visit of the Soviet ship SVERDLOVSK
in October of the same year. C.P.R. were planning an
operation against the SVERDLOVSK and asked R.3 if the Admiralty
could produce the name of a suitable frogman whom they could
approach in connection with the project. CRABB's name was
given and the first approach to him was made by an officer of
S.I.S. - SMITH. He indicated his willingness to undertake
the task and was subsequently introduced to SMITH's superior
officer - DAVIES.

3. There was no further contact with CRABB until about the
middle of March of this year, when SMITH again got into touch
with him to find out if he would be willing to carry out a

/similar ...

- 2 -

task against the Soviet cruiser which was to bring BULGANIN and KRUSCHEV to Portsmouth. CRABB was willing and SMITH promised to give him further details later. SMITH, unfortunately and unknown to his superior officer, also purchased two tables from CRABB's firm to be delivered to his private address and paid by cheque. (Annex 1).

4. Some days later, SMITH telephoned CRABB asking him to hold himself free to carry out the operation on 17th and 18th April, and on the 16th April he again telephoned CRABB to fix a rendezvous for the following day, 17th April.
5. CRABB and SMITH duly met at mid-day in the "Bag O Nails" public house in Buckingham Palace Road, SMITH having parked his car (an office vehicle) containing the gear in Ebury Street. In due course they drove down to Portsmouth, arriving at about 16.30. As they were not due to contact DAVIES until 17.00, CRABB suggested that they should call in at "VERNON" and look up some of his acquaintances there. SMITH reluctantly agreed. They had a cup of tea in the mess, SMITH being introduced to CRABB's friends as "my friend SMITH". No mention was made of SMITH's occupation and the conversation was quiet innocuous. CRABB did not say why he was in Portsmouth and in response to questions said that he was now in the furniture trade. After half an hour or so at "VERNON", CRABB and SMITH left to keep their appointment with DAVIES at the "Keppel's Head", arriving at about 17.30.
6. There followed a discussion about the details of the impending operation with Lt.Cdr. FRANKLIN of "VERNON" who after contact with CRABB was to help the latter to dress.

3.

7. The discussion finished, CRABB and SMITH booked two single rooms at the Sallyport, Nos. 17 and 20. CRABB said that he would require the room for one or two nights and SMITH said he would be staying for two. They both signed the register in their true names and added their correct private addresses.
8. The following morning, 18th April, SMITH and CRABB breakfasted together. CRABB was not required until the afternoon, so after breakfast SMITH spent the morning at an S.I.S. Training Establishment nearby and left CRABB to his own devices. CRABB later told SMITH that he had spent the morning strolling around the park and having the odd drink. He did not mention having met any acquaintances during the course of the time that SMITH was not with him.
9. High tide on the afternoon of the 18th April was at 17.26 and it had been arranged that CRABB should enter the water at the target site at about that time. Accordingly SMITH and CRABB collected the equipment and FRANKLIN, and made their way to the boats in which CRABB was to change into his diving gear. The attached rough sketch plan shows how the boats were placed in relation to the target. The boats were provided with canvas awnings to conceal what was going on from outside view. These awnings had not been provided in advance of the party's arrival at the site. The canvas was obtained by DAVIES from two dockyard /^{mateys} whom he paid £1 apiece. CRABB dressed and entered the water between the two boats. After about half an hour, he surfaced behind the two boats at the spot marked "B" on the plan. He had cut his hand and said that he had experienced a certain amount of trouble in getting his bearings, having got caught up in the piling of the jetty. He was however confident that he would be all right the next time. Before diving, there had been some doubt about his fitness as he had not done any diving for about six months. However FRANKLIN was agreeably /surprised ...

4.

surprised to note that he had used comparatively little oxygen and appeared to be in good trim. No further attempt was possible that evening and after having made arrangements for meeting FRANKLIN early the following morning, SMITH and CRABB parted company at about 19.00, the latter to visit some friends named CRAWFORD living at Havant and the former to pay another visit to the S.I.S. Training Establishment. SMITH got back to the Sallyport at 23.45 and did not see CRABB, whom he had arranged to meet at 05.30 the following morning.

10. The next morning, 19th April, SMITH was astir first and woke CRABB at 05.45. They left the Sallyport together by car and called at FRANKLIN's house to collect him. They had a cup of tea before going straight to the dockyard which they reached at about 06.30. High water was at 06.00. As on the previous afternoon, CRABB dressed on the boat and duly entered the water at the point marked "A" on the sketch plan at a little before 07.00. His instructions were to confine his attention to the after part of the cruiser and not to attempt any reconnaissance of the destroyers. SMITH is confident that the arrival of the party was not observed either from the Soviet ships or from the shore side, No one was about in the dockyard and no signs of life were evident on the ships until 08.00 when they came alive for "colours".

11. When CRABB had not returned after about an hour's absence, SMITH and FRANKLIN began to get somewhat uneasy, as he should have completed his task well within this period. FRANKLIN calculated that judging by the rate at which he had used his oxygen the previous day, CRABB would be able to remain under water for up to two hours and they did not get seriously alarmed until this period had expired. By 09.15 it was obvious that there had been a mishap. Remembering that on the previous day CRABB had surfaced by the pontoons, they searched this

/area ...

5.

but without success. SMITH then explored the piling under the jetty in case CRABB had come to grief there as on the previous afternoon. Throughout the whole of their time on the boats and during their search, neither SMITH nor FRANKLIN had seen or heard any sign of abnormal activity from the Russians.

12. Having given up all hope of finding CRABB, SMITH telephoned DAVIES at the Central Police Station to let him know what had happened. This was at about 09.50, and DAVIES immediately joined SMITH and FRANKLIN at the boats at 10.00. After a short conference they all returned to the D.N.I. office in the dockyard and informed Commander FORBES. DAVIES instructed SMITH to drive FRANKLIN back to VERNON. Some time later in the afternoon of the same day FRANKLIN told his C.O. what had happened and the latter reported the fact to C-in-C Portsmouth.

13. Some time after mid-day, SMITH returned to the Sallyport, packed CRABB's belongings and paid the bill for both rooms in cash. This gave rise to no questions or surprise on the part of the staff. Amongst CRABB's effects was his wallet which contained correspondence showing him to be in pretty low water financially. In addition there were the following items of interest to S.I.S. :-

- (a) a dockyard pass obtained for him by S.I.S.,
- (b) his operational brief,
- (c) SMITH's personal cheque for the tables purchased from CRABB's firm.

All three items have been retained by S.I.S.

14. At the time he was lost, CRABB was not wearing or carrying any item of clothing or equipment by which he could be identified. Most of his diving gear was of a type which is obtainable from normal civilian suppliers. Some items
/were ...

6.

Admiralty stores but it is believed that these also can be obtained commercially.

15. A note on errors in "tradecraft" is at Annex 2.

10.5.56.

ANNEX 1

During the course of one of his telephone conversations with CRABB at his office, SMITH ordered two tables. These were subsequently collected personally by SMITH from CRABB's office. No invoice was produced by CRABB who merely told SMITH that the price of the goods less 10 per cent. discount was £4. 18. 6. SMITH handed CRABB a cheque for this amount made out to Elmbourne Ltd.

Unfortunately, the cheque was incorrectly drawn and when CRABB met SMITH on 17th April, at the commencement of their visit to Portsmouth he told SMITH of the error in the cheque and asked him to correct it, which SMITH did. CRABB returned the cheque to his wallet.

We subsequently learned that before meeting SMITH, CRABB had told PENDOCK that he would be seeing SMITH and would take the opportunity of asking him to amend the cheque.

On learning of this incident, we feared that there might be some record in the firm's books showing SMITH's private address. This does not look to have been the case since, up to now, no enquiries at that address appear to have been made by the Press or by the firm.

On 9th May, after getting Admiralty and M.I.5. agreement, SMITH's debt of £4. 18. 6 was paid in cash. The person making the payment was accosted by the Press shortly after leaving the firm's offices but contact was broken satisfactorily.

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Man 1/c SmithANNEX 2.ERRORS IN "TRADECRAFT".

1. The whole operation should have been looked at from the point of view of unattributability and a cover plan prepared.
2. SMITH should not have allowed his name and address to be known to anyone other than members of this Service throughout the whole period of his contact with CRABB, as this led back to his notional employment as an unestablished member of the Foreign Service.
3. As in the preceding operation, during the visit of the SVERDLOVSK, CRABB should have been taken down from London immediately before the operation and returned to London immediately after it with a minimum of time in Portsmouth.
4. CRABB should not have been allowed his way in calling at "VERNON", or to wander about Portsmouth after the trial run.
5. For SMITH to sign his real name and address in the register was criminal folly (presumably CRABB had to do so as he was too well known in Portsmouth to sign in a false name).
6. Not to be already provided with canvas was a grave error in planning, while the method of obtaining it was also a bad error.
7. CRABB seems to have told his partner - PENDOCK - that he was going to Portsmouth with SMITH to get some diving practice.

APPENDIX "B" : SOME DETAILS
of CRABB's FRIENDS & RELATIVES

THE FROGMAN CASE

B.

1. On Wednesday, 25th April, D.N.I. obtained the approval of Vice Chief Naval Staff for the Admiralty to admit sponsorship of the operation and Captain SARELL, R.N. was detailed to get into touch with CRABB's employer, Mr. Maitland PENDOCK to find out as much detail as he could regarding CRABB's social contacts and also to inform him that CRABB was missing following trials of secret underwater equipment at Portsmouth on behalf of the Admiralty.

It was already known that PENDOCK had been making enquiries, as he had contacted inter alia, a Naval Officer named CRAWFORD, a member of the Harwich Staff living at Havant. CRAWFORD had informed D.N.I. of this approach, adding that he had told PENDOCK that he had no knowledge of CRABB having come to any harm, which was indeed the truth. It was this CRAWFORD that CRABB had visited on the evening of Wednesday, 18th April at his home at Havant.

Sarell called on PENDOCK at 17.00 on Wednesday 25th April at his business address in Seymour Place and took him to his, SARELL's, flat.

2. It should be noted in parenthesis that M.I.5's information on PENDOCK was not particularly reassuring. There was a trace in their records dated 1940 of a Maitland PENDOCK, then engaged in the publicity business, who was associated with a man named Claude COCKBURN, the editor of "The Week" an extreme left-wing publication. PENDOCK himself was said to be a leftist and was the object of some disfavour for having spread alarmist and

/defeatist ...

- 2 -

defeatist talk. This was the more disquieting because we then understood from CRAWFORD's report that PENDOCK not only knew that CRABB had been diving at Portsmouth but that his visit was in connection with the Soviet ships. There was however clearly no option but to approach him.

3. SARELL formed the impression that PENDOCK is a somewhat muddle-minded individual who may well have held advanced left-wing views in the past. He does not however believe that there is any real vice left in him nowadays. He was worried at the failure of his attempts to secure any definite information about CRABB and was indeed thinking of consulting a clairvoyant, Madame Theodosia. He seemed to be relieved to have even SARELL's bad news and readily agreed to co-operate in putting out the agreed line in response to any further enquirers.

4. It emerged that he did not in fact know more of CRABB's purpose in going down to Portsmouth than that he intended to get some diving practice, he supposed under Navy auspices as an R.N.V.R. reservist. He added that he had known CRABB for about 25 years and had helped him out of a number of scrapes. CRABB was a very free spender, was usually heavily in debt and in fact owes PENDOCK's firm a fair amount.

5. As to CRABB's next-of-kin, PENDOCK said that this would be his mother who lives somewhere in the Aston Rowant/Thame area. He did not have her exact address by him but engaged to get it and let SARELL have it. PENDOCK did not envisage any immediate likelihood of an enquiry

/from ...

- 3 -

from Mrs. CRABB senior, as CRABB was not in regular touch with her, the usual purpose of his visits being to touch her for a loan. CRABB "did not get on with women" according to PENDOCK. He had been married but this had broken up after about eighteen months and they were now divorced. He thought it unlikely that there would be any enquiries from that quarter. In so far as CRABB had any "steady" girl friend it was a Mrs. Pat DILL, wife of the Victor DILL who was involved in a fairly recent racehorse switching case. DILL himself now lives in France at Maison Lafitte and PENDOCK believed that Mrs. DILL had gone over to France quite recently and intended to stay there for about six months. At a later meeting with PENDOCK, SARELL learned that this was not in fact so but that she is in fact leaving at the end of next week. Mrs. DILL has some connection with one AITKEN, believed to be a relation of Lord BEAVERBROOK, which might provide a link to the "Daily Express" should she intend to make trouble for any reason. Another member of the same set is Howard JOHNSTON of the "Daily Mirror" (the paper's Naval correspondent). All of these were in the habit of meeting at a Club near the Coliseum but PENDOCK did not believe that CRABB had been there very recently. The only other relative mentioned by PENDOCK was a cousin named HONEYBALL living at Byfleet.

6. To return to the action already taken by PENDOCK up to the time SARELL first contacted him. He said that CRABB had said before leaving London that he expected to be back by Friday. He had telephoned PENDOCK on Tuesday and Wednesday from his friend CRAWFORD at Havant and also from the "Sally Port". Hence after he had failed to telephone PENDOCK on Thursday and had not returned to London on

/Friday ...

- 4 -

Friday, PENDOCK telephoned both CRAWFORD and the "Sally Port". CRAWFORD replied that he did not know where CRABB was but had no reason to suppose that anything untoward had happened to him. The "Sally Port" said that he had left the Hotel on Thursday morning and that his bill had been paid by his companion. Having drawn a blank there, PENDOCK went to a B.B.C. friend for advice as to what he should do next. This was a Miss Ruth DREW and she suggested that he should consult one FALLON, formerly Head of the River Police. PENDOCK was in fact about to meet FALLON later in the evening when SARELL first contacted him. He agreed to tell FALLON that he had received information about his missing friend and had no need to make further enquiries.

7. CRABB's landlady at 2a, Hans Road had enquired of PENDOCK whether he had any news regarding his return but he had of course been unable to tell her anything. He agreed to get in touch with her, inform her that CRABB had gone away and would not be returning and also to collect CRABB's effects and pay off the landlady. He did not expect to encounter any difficulties because the landlady knew him well as one of CRABB's friends.

8. Apart from a number of business clients who had attempted to get into touch with CRABB regarding their orders, (CRABB looked after this side of the business and his loss is a blow to PENDOCK who does not appear to be a very practical individual) the main enquirer was one Marshall PUGH, a free-lance journalist and writer with an office at ODHAM'S PRESS. PUGH has recently completed a biography of CRABB which is to be published by MACMILLANS. The member of the latter firm who is directly handling the book is Alan MACLEAN, Donald

/MACLEAN's

- 5 -

MACLEAN's brother. PENDOCK had told PUGH that CRABB had been recalled by the Navy for an exercise. PUGH was subsequently told the agreed story of CRABB's loss. Although the biography was PUGH's own work and was not written as a "ghost" for CRABB, it seems probable that he would have made some eventual payment to the latter. Others interested in CRABB are James GLEESON, of Higham News Service, Higham House, Curzon Street, W.1 and his colaborator Tom WALDRON of the B.B.C. GLEESON is the author of "Frogmen" and there is some talk of there having been a possibility of a B.B.C. contract in store for CRABB.

9. No further acquaintances of special note have come to light but it is quite evident that CRABB was well known to a very large number of people in Portsmouth and elsewhere, any of whom might be expected to start up enquiries in the absence of any definite news regarding CRABB's whereabouts.

APPENDIX "C" : BRIEF SUMMARY OF
ACTION TAKEN UP TO
28th APRIL.

THE FROGMAN CASE

1. It is hardly feasible to record in detail the day-to-day action taken by this, and other interested Services since mid-day on Thursday 19th April. Meetings between representatives of S.I.S., M.I.5, The Admiralty and the Foreign Office were practically continuous during the whole of the week of 23rd/27th April. Broadly however the progress of events was as follows:-
2. During the afternoon of 19th April, those concerned in H.O. were given an outline of what had occurred by the S.I.S. officer already informed who then went down to Portsmouth accompanied by another senior S.I.S. officer. Contact was made by them with Commander FORBES, the D.N.I. Liaison Officer and with Chief Superintendant LAMPORT of Portsmouth City Police.

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- M.I.5 and the
- Foreign Office Adviser in S.I.S. Headquarters (F.O.A.) were also given an account of what had so far transpired and of the action taken.
3. At this stage the possible explanations for CRABB's loss seemed to be the following:-

- (a) That he had been observed by the Russians and taken aboard alive;
- (b) That he had been destroyed by Russian counter measures and that his body was either,

/(i). ...

- 2 -

- (i) aboard the Russian ship,
- or (ii) still in the water;
- (c) That he had been the victim of a natural mishap and that his body was still in the water.

Possibility (a) was thought to be the least likely as it is extremely difficult to get a live swimmer aboard ship without considerable fuss and although our two observers in the boats moored by the pontoons were unsighted, they had heard nothing untoward. There was also the Naval signal tower nearby which overlooked the cruiser.

Possibility (b) (i) was felt to be almost equally unlikely for similar reasons but by no means impossible.

Possibility (b) (ii) seemed much the most likely.

4. The next consideration was the manner in which the body might come to light. If it was aboard the Russian ship, they might produce it for propaganda purposes at an opportune moment either dead or alive, or they might dispose of it after leaving Portsmouth. If the body was lying in the immediate vicinity of the ships, either fouled by the ship's gear or lying in the mud, it might be thrown up on the departure of the ships. If however it was clear of the ships, it would either sink into the mud or be washed out to sea by the current. The concensus of expert opinion was that, being heavily weighted, if it was neither aboard the Russian ships nor came to light at the time of their departure, it would in all probability never be recovered.

5. It was apparent that if the Russians did indeed have the body, no action that we could take in advance could stave off disaster if they chose to reveal the fact. The only steps left to us were those which could be taken to deal as

/discreetly ...

- 3 -

discreetly as possible with the events which would follow upon any subsequent finding of the body and to take all practicable steps to disassociate the affair from any hint of official complicity, or should this not prove possible, to discover how many persons outside official circles would inevitably discover that it was an officially sponsored venture and whether they could be trusted to keep silent about it.

6. The next significant development was a report received on 22nd April that during the course of a dinner party on the previous night, the Russian Admiral referred to the presence of a diver near the forepart of one of his destroyers between 07.00 and 08.00 on Thursday, 19th April.
7. Further investigation into the possibility of passing the business off as a purely private escapade on CRABB's part soon showed that this could not succeed. On the one hand, we were in the dark regarding the quarters from which enquiries into his disappearance might be expected. Nor did we know how many people he had told he was going to Portsmouth or for what purpose. We did know that CRABB's partner - PENDOCK - had rung up a naval officer in Portsmouth to enquire why CRABB had not returned on Friday as expected. But also there was the inescapable fact that any serious enquiries would certainly reveal a link with the Foreign Office through SMITH, owing to the disastrous circumstance of his having registered at the "Sally Port" under his true name and address with CRABB.
8. Hence the conclusion we were all (D.N.I., M.I.5, M.I.6, Foreign Office) forced to on 24th April was that the only hope of forestalling enquiries and publicity was to present the operation as being Admiralty sponsored but at the same time to conceal its true nature and exact location. The D.N.I. was naturally extremely reluctant to see the

/Admiralty ...

- 4 -

Admiralty involved but as there seemed to be no other course at all likely to succeed in sparing H.M.G. extreme embarrassment during the remainder of the Russian visit or possibly longer. D.N.I. eventually agreed on the afternoon of Wednesday 25th April to put the matter to Vice Chief Naval Staff, who sanctioned this move and deputed SARELL to act as Admiralty representative in dealing with CRABB's contacts and next-of-kin.

9. The Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office had been informed on April 23rd and was kept informed of the progress of the case. *He* decided that as the Admiralty had taken charge *he* would inform the Foreign Secretary if and when the First Lord was told. Knowing this V.C.N.S. decided that for the present he would keep knowledge of the affair at his level. M.I.5 were concerned that they should be immediately informed if there was any possibility of the case reaching the political level in either the Foreign Office or the Admiralty in order that they might forewarn Sir Frank Newsam.

10. On the morning of Friday 27th April, D.N.I., accompanied by SARELL reported progress to C.S.S. at a meeting in his office. The results of SARELL's researches are recorded in Appendix "B" and he also announced that he had arranged to visit CRABB's mother the same evening accompanied by the cousin, HONEYBALL. The formula of a *met* draft ADMIRALTY statement to be used in case of enquiry from the Press was drawn up and agreed. D.N.I. took this to the Secretary of the Admiralty in the afternoon, who decided to keep the matter at his level at least until Monday 30th April, in view of the then state of the incident.

11. The Soviet ships duly departed at 14.15 on Friday afternoon without untoward incident.

/12. ...

12. SARELL saw Mrs. CRABB on Friday evening together with HONEYBALL, the cousin. She was naturally much upset at the news but did not seem to find anything mysterious in it.

*Memorandum handed in by FOA
(10.30 Monday 14th May)*

A

CLEARANCES FOR DELICATE OPERATIONS

The statement by the Chairman of the J.I.C. (J.I.C.1084/52 of 8th May 1952 (at Appendix 'A')) gives general guidance on procedure to be adopted in clearing intelligence operations which may have serious political consequences. This statement is the basis for S.I.S. clearance procedure. The senior Foreign Office Adviser to S.I.S., appointed in October 1952, is the official through whom the procedure is applied.

Prior to this J.I.C. statement, procedure for clearance of delicate operations was a matter of "case law". Guidance and emphasis has been received from the Foreign Office from time to time, but normally in relation to particular aspects of clearance, e.g. operations behind the Iron Curtain, operations done in conjunction with friendly Intelligence Services.

The S.I.S. understanding of the present position is that delicate operations, i.e. those that could cause serious political embarrassment if they misfired, should be referred in a foreign country first to the Head of Mission and, if necessary, to the Foreign Office Adviser in S.I.S. as well. If they are operations of a more all-embracing nature affecting not only one Mission, or taking place in the United Kingdom, they are referred to F.O.A. The understanding and practice further is that F.O.A. will say whether he can clear an operation informally himself, with or without reference to the Foreign Office Department or Departments concerned, or whether he wishes to take the matter higher, i.e. to the Supervising Under Secretary of the P.U.S.D.

/or to

- 2 -

or to the Permanent Under Secretary. If it reaches that level, it is for the P.U.S. to decide whether he gives clearance or refers it to his Secretary of State, who in turn may clear or refer to the Prime Minister. There is no instruction which says that "Ministerial" clearance is necessary for all delicate operations. It is further understood in S.I.S. that if F.O.A. demurs or meets difficulty in obtaining clearance at departmental level in the Foreign Office, 'C' (or his deputy in his absence) would decide how far they would be prepared to press for clearance. There have been a number of cases in the past where 'C' has decided to cancel an operation which has been broached at F.O.A.'s level rather than press for higher approval. There have also been cases where 'C' has interviewed the P.U.S. to give explanation in support of clearance in cases where, in the S.I.S. view, the risks were marginal.

The procedure for clearance which has developed from these understandings is that the responsible Production Branch conducts provisional planning for its delicate operations and when an adequate stage in the planning has been reached, makes a submission to F.O.A. The submission can range from an informal one (verbally or with papers) for the more simple operations, to a formal submission for the most delicate. The rules of procedure provide for a focal point in a Staff Officer who keeps watch that the necessary clearances for delicate operations are sought. /

Political clearance should not, and is not, meant to offload the responsibility; it is merely to recognise that S.I.S. has foreseen the possibility of political

/embarrassment

- 3 -

embarrassment and has recorded that fact to the Foreign Office so that they in turn can weigh up whether they are prepared to accept the risk of such embarrassment. Their agreement does not make them responsible for an operation in the event of failure, nor does it make them admit responsibility for the operation diplomatically or in Parliament. Their clearance merely means that they would give us moral support if the operation backfired.

Arrangements for clearing Special Political Action by S.I.S. are detailed in Appendix 'B'.

At Appendix 'C' is a list of references to some of the instructions or notes of guidance which have been circulated in the past five years on the question of Foreign Office clearances.

There is no precise differentiation between procedure for clearance of delicate operations abroad or in the United Kingdom, with the exception that in some operations undertaken in the latter there is close cooperation between S.I.S. and M.I.5, and this often calls for duplicate clearance, first by the Foreign Office and secondly by M.I.5 from the Home Office.

B

FOREIGN OFFICE,
S.W.1.

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

May 14, 1956.

Dear Bridges,

*J.I.C. report
referred to by Sir
Kirkpatrick
11.30 / 14 May*

I enclose herewith, as requested, a copy of a statement made at the J.I.C. on May 8, 1952, by my predecessor, Reilly, about clearance with the Foreign Office of intelligence operations which may have serious political consequences. I think I should make it clear that the context of this statement was the type of operation which is cleared directly between the Service Department concerned and the Foreign Office and not that in which M.I.6 play a part. Nevertheless the principle seems to apply equally in either case.

I also enclose two tentative suggestions for improving the present machinery for the consideration and clearance of operations inside the United Kingdom or on special occasions. I have shown these to Kirkpatrick. They would amount to the tightening up of the present machinery inside each Department and to a special procedure for considering and clearing all operations of this type where political considerations are likely to be important. I have not shown these suggestions to my Service colleagues and I do not know whether they would be acceptable to them in this form. I think probably the War Office and the Air Ministry would be ready to agree to the desirability of some such procedure as this but I have more doubts about the Admiralty. I do not know whether these suggestions will be of any use to you, but Kirkpatrick suggested that I should send them to you for what they are worth.

*Mr Dean
telephoned to
show this.*

dm

*Yours Sincerely
Patrick Dean.*

(P. Dean)

Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY.

COPY

TOP SECRET

CLEARANCE WITH THE FOREIGN OFFICE OF
INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE
SERIOUS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

I should be very grateful if Directors could note the following points about the handling of such questions with the Foreign Office. If the right procedure is followed, the chances of getting approval for dangerous intelligence operations are much better than if it is not.

1. Sir William Strang has ruled that all such questions should be dealt with through myself or through the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, of which I am Supervising Under-Secretary. It is the business of my side of the house in the Foreign Office to represent the interests of intelligence in the Foreign Office and we have the know-how of handling this sort of thing. We are of course responsible for clearing any proposals with the geographical department and Under-Secretary concerned, before their submission to Sir William Strang. In general this procedure is working well now, except in the case of the Admiralty where M Branch, in spite of requests to the contrary, continue to deal direct with the geographical department. This slows up the whole procedure and makes it much more difficult than it need be to get approval for the proposed operation.

Where an operation is of sufficient importance to be dealt with on the Chiefs of Staff or Permanent Secretary level, there is of course no objection whatever to a letter being sent to Sir William Strang himself. He will always refer it to me in the first instance and the thing will then get off on the right foot from the start.

2. It is, I am afraid, no use asking the Foreign Office for "approval in principle" for some dangerous intelligence operation. I can understand that the Service Departments are often reluctant to embark on complicated planning for a difficult operation without knowing whether the operation has any chance of being approved. I am afraid, however, that it is quite impossible for us to obtain the Foreign Secretary's "approval in principle" for dangerous operations without fairly detailed knowledge of what is involved. The reason is that we cannot form any useful judgment of the political dangers without knowing pretty accurately what is proposed. I am sorry if this sometimes means wasted work on planning. I think, however, that I can fairly claim that the Foreign Office's record in getting approval for dangerous operations has recently been pretty good.

3. In the light of recent experience about "C's" proposals for dropping agents by parachute, I am afraid that I must ask that any proposals submitted to the Foreign Office should have high level operational approval in the Service Department concerned. I know that some of "C's" recent proposals were ruled out because of experience of an operation which took place after they were submitted. Others, however, were ruled out before that operation, but after we had submitted them to the Foreign Secretary in the belief that they had operational approval. I am afraid that I really cannot let this happen again. In future, therefore, before I can recommend that the Secretary of State should approve some dangerous operation, I

- 1 -

TOP SECRET

Finally may I repeat that I regard it as a most important task of my part of the Foreign Office to get approval for operations of this kind and the Committee may be sure that we shall always do our utmost to help. There is a widespread and long-standing impression that no dangerous operation has a chance of getting approval from the Foreign Office. This is quite untrue. If you want our help, however, you must, I am afraid, play the game according to our rules, tiresome as these doubtless often seem.

TOP SECRET

SUGGESTED INTERNAL DEPARTMENTAL MACHINERY FOR CONSIDERING OPERATIONS IN THE U.K.

Each Department represented on the J.I.C. should overhaul the machinery for obtaining clearance for any operations to be undertaken inside the U.K. so as to ensure that special attention is paid to them from the point of view of the fullest consideration being given to their likely value and success and to the political repercussions in the event of any mishap.

SUGGESTED J.I.C. MACHINERY FOR CONSIDERING AND OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR OPERATIONS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

The J.I.C. should be instructed to devise and establish suitable machinery for pooling all information and ideas about projected operations and for ensuring that political clearance is sought in an orderly and timely fashion, accompanied by a presentation of all relevant considerations, and is in fact obtained for all such operations before they are carried out. Examples where such machinery should operate are:

- (a) where special opportunities are likely to occur for obtaining intelligence (e.g. during visits of prominent foreigners to this country, etc.);
- (b) where any organisation~~/~~ represented on the J.I.C. ^{ss}wish₂ to mount operations to obtain intelligence in circumstances where other organisations are likely to wish to do the same;
- (c) where for any other reasons it appears likely that specific political clearance will be required and a pooling of information and ideas would be useful.

*Statement tabled by 'C' : 4 pm Monday 14th May
Controllers Report*

C

The Frogman Operation arose indirectly from the increased effort which S.I.S. was asked by N.I.D. to put into the obtaining of intelligence on the Russian Navy. News that the Russian Fleet would in the course of 1956 be visiting a number of Western European countries obviously provided a first-class opportunity. It was thus arranged that (in accordance with his charter) R.O.S. should be in charge of the overall co-ordination of attacks against this target; and that DAVIS would be in charge of

- (i) advising certain friendly Intelligence Services on action we wished them to take, and
- (ii) operations against the Russian ships in Portsmouth.

2. One of the requirements which N.I.D. asked us to undertake was that of the underwater inspection of the Russian vessels. After consultation with them it was agreed that this requirement could only be met by the use of frogmen. They themselves were not willing to allow official Naval frogmen to carry out this task and we had no alternative other than to use CRABB whose name they had originally suggested to us. They made it clear that they regarded the operation as of great importance and D.N.I. has confirmed that he considered it was "a reasonable risk". From the beginning C.S.S. had emphasised to C.P.R. that the operations which it was intended to carry out in Portsmouth were extremely delicate. Subsequently C.P.R. and others concerned (in particular D/C.N.E. and R.O.S.) were fully satisfied that DAVIS absolutely understood the seriousness and delicacy of the operation and the implications of any mishap.

/3 ...

- 2 -

3. DAVIS was in charge, not only of the frogman operation, but of various other activities in Portsmouth at the same time. He was thus obliged to delegate certain of the responsibilities for the handling of CRABB to his assistant, SMITH. In delegating this authority, DAVIS was satisfied that SMITH absolutely understood that the operation was highly secret, delicate and must be unattributable. It is admittedly unfortunate that despite this fact SMITH neglected certain basic principles of tradecraft which as a G.I.O. should have been second nature to him.

4. This minute has been compiled, and agreed with D/C.N.E., R.O.S. and DAVIS.

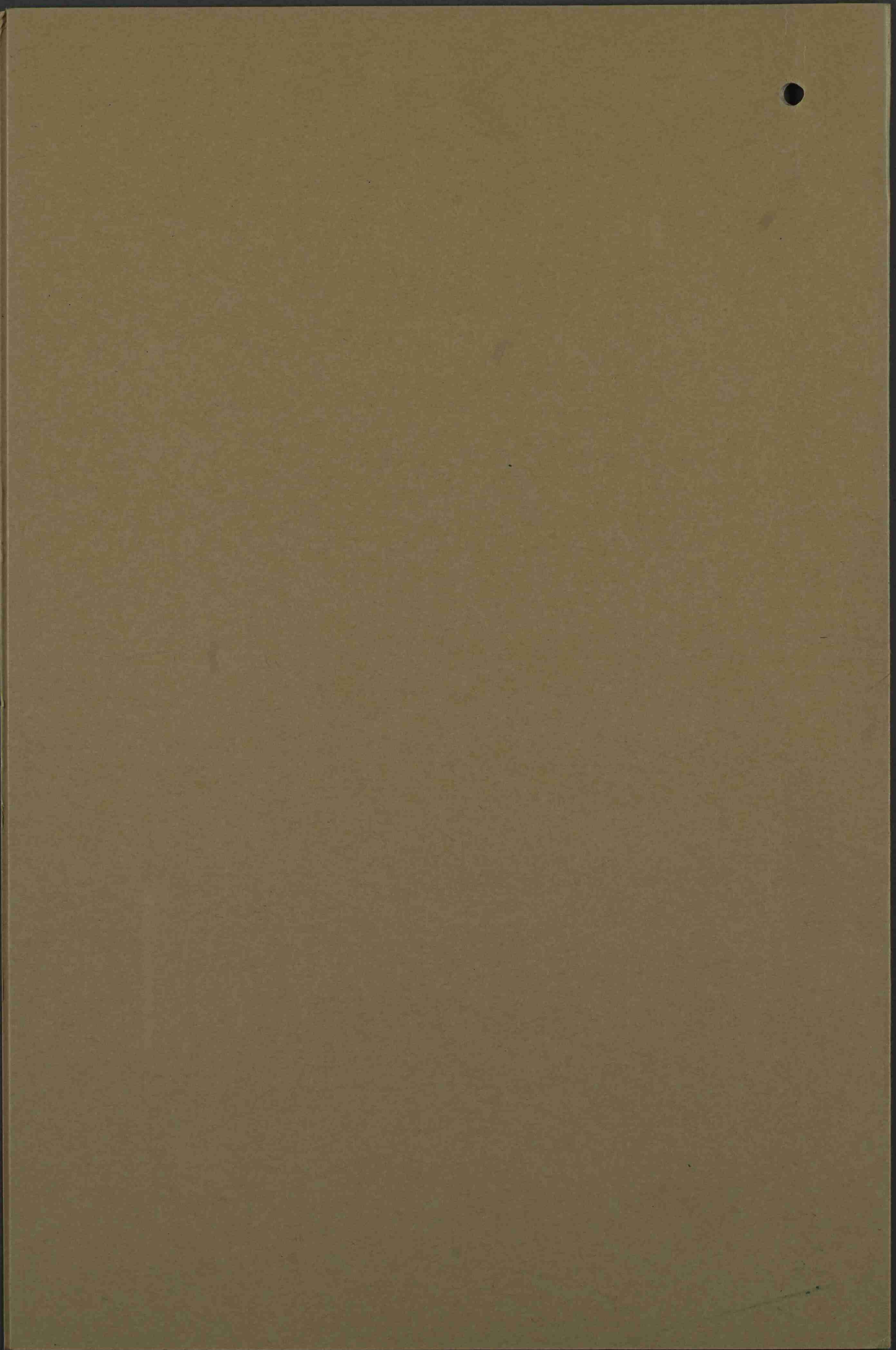
Davis

Smith

Hans

31

Seymour



CAB 301/125

(5)

TROGMAN. The Bridges Enquiry into the disappearance
of Commander Crabb: further Enquiry into Ministerial
responsibility for intelligence - gathering operations

Foreign Office,
S.W.1.

JICX 183

November 19, 1956.

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

Dear Bridges

I am sorry to have been so long in answering your letter of October 31 about the aftermath of Crabb.

I now enclose a copy of the agreed J.I.C. report about the procedure for obtaining clearance for intelligence gathering operations. There was, as you know, one point outstanding which arose in paragraphs 3 (b)(i) and paragraph 4. Agreement has now been reached at the J.I.C. on the following wording:-

"The requisitioning department must be ready, on request, to provide at Ministerial or highest official level an unequivocal statement"

This appears in the last sentence of paragraph 3(b)(i) and in the second and last sentence of paragraph 4.

I agree with you that it will probably be necessary for the Prime Minister to see the J.I.C. report though he may not require to read it all through.

I also agree with your revised draft note to the Prime Minister and the draft minute from the Prime Minister to the Foreign Secretary and Minister of Defence.

I would have replied to your letter earlier if we had not been so pressed by Suez.

Yours Ever
P. Dean

(P. Dean)

Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY.

TOP SECRET

MR. P.H. DEAN
REAR ADMIRAL J.G.T. INGLIS
MAJOR GENERAL C.R. PRICE
AIR VICE MARSHAL W.M.L. MacDONALD.
SIR DICK WHITE
MR. R.H. HOLLIS
MR. E.M. JONES

J.I.C./2790/56

COPY NO. 20

PERSONAL

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING CLEARANCE FOR INTELLIGENCE
GATHERING OPERATIONS

(Previous reference JIC/2030/56 dated 14th August 1956)

At your meeting, on Tuesday 13th November 1956, you discussed a memorandum on this subject which was attached as Annex to my minute referred to above.

2. In the course of your discussion you agreed certain amendments to paras 3(b)(i), and 4. You instructed me to produce a revised memorandum which the Chairman could send to Sir E. Bridges.

3. The revised memorandum is attached at Annex.

(Signed) J.G. ATKINSON,
Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee.

15th November, 1956

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETANNEXPROCEDURE FOR CO-ORDINATION AND OBTAINING
CLEARANCE FOR SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

The Prime Minister has asked Sir E. Bridges to examine and report to him on two general matters concerning special intelligence operations which are likely to cause embarrassment to Her Majesty's Government if they miscarry:-

- (a) The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
- (b) Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister (or some other Minister) in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

2. There are various types of operations falling within the category referred to by the Prime Minister. These operations are for the purpose of gathering information and not for subversion. They vary according to the number of departments interested in the operation, and may be any one of the following types which are examined separately below:-

- (a) operations affecting one or more departments, but not involving any collecting agency.
- (b) operations affecting one or more departments and/or a collecting agency.
- (c) operations affecting the Security Service.
- (d) operations on special occasions.

3. Operations affecting one or more departments but not involving any collecting agency.

These operations fall into two categories:-

- (a) Those operations mounted by a department to satisfy its own needs. The procedure in this case will be that the department concerned will send details of the operation to the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, and will put up the case to their own Secretary of State, who in due course minutes the Prime Minister, with a copy to the Foreign Secretary.

NOTE: Clearance of a specific operation or a series for which "blanket" approval has been given is sometimes given by or on behalf of the Foreign Secretary. In other cases he may consider that the operation should also be approved by the Prime Minister. ✓

- 1 -

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

- (b) Those operations which arise from a requisition by one department which another department will have to carry out (e.g. War Office request for Photographic Reconnaissance by the Air Ministry). The procedure will be:-
- (i) The two Departments concerned will work out the details together and concert their plan with the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office. The requisitioning department must be ready, on request, to provide at Ministerial or highest official level an unequivocal statement establishing the need for the requirement and reasons for selecting the method proposed for obtaining it.
 - (ii) The Secretary of State of the collecting Department will minute the Prime Minister seeking his approval, sending copies of his minute to the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State of the requisitioning department. Exceptionally a copy will be sent to the Minister of Defence. At the same time, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, will be warned that the request is being made.

In this case the burden of responsibility lies with the collecting department, whose Minister will have to answer in Parliament if the operation miscarries. It is important that all the actions in sub-paragraph (ii) above are taken in parallel.

NOTE: For specific operations at short notice affecting two departments for which "blanket" approval has been given, the requisitioning department will initiate the operation, informing the Prime Minister's Office, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, and the collecting department (if other than the requisitioning department). The operation will be carried out unless one of the above-mentioned authorities forbid it.

4. Operations affecting one or more departments and/or a collecting agency.

These operations may arise from an agency itself or from a request by one or more departments to M.I.6. or G.C.H.Q. for intelligence. The requisitioning department must be ready, on request, to state at Ministerial or highest official level the requirement to the collecting agency. In overseas operations, M.I.6 or G.C.H.Q., after consultation with any other departments concerned, will submit a plan to the Foreign Office for approval. Where such operations are to take place in the United Kingdom, M.I.6 or G.C.H.Q. will also consult the Security Service, who will be responsible for deciding whether Home Office clearance is necessary. Where a requisitioning department's requirement can only be met by a collecting agency by an operation incurring considerable risk, the department must be ready, on request, to confirm at Ministerial or highest official level that in their view the requirement should still stand despite the risk.

- 2 -
TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET5. Operations affecting the Security Service

The Security Service is also a collecting agency for intelligence required by other departments, but its position is a special one. It is not normally requested by any department to procure specified items of intelligence. It may respond to requests from a department (which is itself often another collecting department) for intensified effort in certain fields. The Security Service has procedures for clearance which are established by long usage. These usually involve Home Office clearance, but there are exceptions which also or solely concern the Foreign Office (e.g. operations against foreign diplomats in the U.K.) or Colonial governments (e.g. certain operations in colonial territory). Action may fall to the Security Service in the course of operations on special occasions. In these circumstances the Security Service becomes a full party to the provisions of paragraph 6 below.

6. Operations on Special Occasions

The main principle to be observed in the case of operations on special occasions (such as the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit, Air Delegation visit to Moscow, Geneva Conference, or visits of Scientific Delegations) is that early discussion is necessary to co-ordinate action and prevent overlapping before plans reach different stages of preparation, and to determine priorities.

While it is not necessary to have a formal procedure for dealing with such occasions, the opportunity offered by such occasions for collecting intelligence is a matter of concern to the Joint Intelligence Committee.

The procedure will be that any Director of Intelligence on learning of any such impending events, will inform the Chairman, who will arrange for a discussion, in Committee, to co-ordinate action to exploit the intelligence potential of the occasion to the maximum.

7. Responsibility for informing Departments of a Minister's decision

- (a) When the Foreign Secretary, or the Permanent Under-Secretary, Foreign Office, on behalf of the Foreign Secretary, approve a special intelligence operation, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, will be responsible for informing the departments and agencies concerned of the decision.
- (b) In cases in which the final decision is taken by the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Private Office will be responsible for ensuring that the Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee and the private offices of the departments directly concerned with the special intelligence operation are informed simultaneously of the Prime Minister's decision. The Chairman, J.I.C. will be responsible for ensuring that departments and collecting agencies indirectly concerned are informed of the Prime Minister's decision.

- 3 -
TOP SECRET



✓ EEB

What would you like
me to say, please?

Then Mills
I have so bid
Mr Bp.

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

DM 16/11

DM 15/11

November 15, 1956.

Dear Derek,

In your letter of October 20 you thought that Bridges would have finished the top secret report on which he has been engaged by the end of October. There is no immediate urgency for the Prime Minister to receive it, but I should be grateful if you would let me know when we may expect it.

Yours

Frederic Baker

DM
Quel funo
I had to get Pat Dean

to agree his report with ME -
Now I only await the

letting me know (not surprised) - some congestion in the system is
So then for reminders with file
at next week.

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury.

EJB

TOP SECRET

31st October, 1956

Crabb - Sequeleae

I have been an intolerably long time clearing this up. To tell the truth, extricating myself from my job has been much harder work than I liked. This is one of the old bones which I am clearing up in a room in the old building of the Treasury.

I had a word with Powell who is entirely agreeable to what is proposed.

I also had a word with Norman who agreed but thought we might cut down the amount of reading matter to be sent to the P.M.

I have prepared a revised draft which, as you will see, is based mainly on your note. I should be glad if you would have a look at it before I send it in.

/There

P.H. Dean, Esq., C.M.G.

There is one point which rather troubles me. In your draft you don't suggest that the J.I.C. report should be shown to the Prime Minister. It is a long document and I would not want to suggest that he should flog through it. On the other hand, if I don't send him this document, won't he ask what steps have been taken to carry out the specific matters remitted to him? I cannot really see how we can avoid letting him have a copy.

If so, what is the status of the pencilled alterations in the copy which you gave me? Have they been accepted?

E.R.

TOP SECRETPRIME MINISTER

On the 26th June I was asked to examine and report to you on two questions arising out of the Crabb affair, viz:

1. The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
2. Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister or some other Minister in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

These questions were examined by the Joint Intelligence Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Patrick Dean. They have produced a report (copy annexed) which I think deals with the two specific questions remitted to me.

But while this report is, I think, all right as far as it goes, I doubt if it gets to the root of the matter. Why is it that you and other Ministers feel a lack of confidence in the preparation and execution of many operations designed to collect intelligence? Why are you apt to feel that the balance is too much tilted in favour of military intelligence and that civil intelligence and political risks are not given sufficient balance?

I think the reason for this is that the Joint Intelligence Committee, although it has in Mr. Dean a very admirable Foreign Office Chairman, consists for the most part of Service Intelligence people and is responsible to the Chiefs of Staff. Given that the Chairman has no power to impose decisions, the Committee have an inevitable bias to maintain their Service requirements of intelligence and to oppose any substantial switch from military to non-military targets.

/How

E.R.

How can ^{be} ~~one~~ set this right? It would be useless to bring in someone new who was unfamiliar with the field. I suggest that you should ask the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence to agree that Mr. Dean, in his personal capacity, should be authorised to carry out a special enquiry. The details of what I have in mind are set out in the annexed draft.

31st October, 1956

E.R.TOP SECRETNOTE FOR RECORD

I had a word with Sir Richard Powell about this and showed him the draft minute for the P.M. to send to the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence. He entirely approved of the principle concerned and his comments were confined to drafting.

He said that if a minute like this were sent to the Minister of Defence he would do his best to play and get the scheme through.

31st October, 1956

E.R.

TOP SECRET

DRAFT Minute from the Prime Minister
to

Foreign Secretary and Minister of Defence

You will remember that Sir Edward Bridges was requested at a Ministerial meeting on June 26 to examine and report further to me on two general matters arising from the incident of Commander Crabb.

2. Sir Edward Bridges has now informed me that he is satisfied that the J.I.C. have devised a procedure which will secure proper co-ordination in obtaining political clearances for intelligence gathering operations, whether on behalf of civilian or military departments. This should ensure that in future there will be no repetition of the disasters which occurred in the case of Commander Crabb.

3. Sir Edward Bridges has also told me that he thinks there is another and more fundamental question which is the real cause why Ministers at present feel a lack of confidence in the preparation and execution of many intelligence gathering operations which are submitted to them for their approval.

4. Under our present joint system the J.I.C. is responsible to the Chiefs of Staff for giving higher direction, reviewing and generally organising our intelligence system. Under this system, however, the Joint Intelligence Committee has been finding it exceedingly difficult to reach a satisfactory balance between the requirements for the military type of intelligence required by the Service Departments and the other forms of political and economic intelligence which are required by the Foreign Office, the Colonial

/Office

E.R.

Office and other civilian departments for the present conditions of limited war, "cold war" and competitive co-existence. It is recognised that there is a need for both types of intelligence but the problem is how to reconcile the requirements of both sides so as to ensure that the requirements put forward in the first place to the collecting agencies and the consequent plans for collecting intelligence submitted by them for Ministerial approval are properly in accord with governmental policy at the material time.

5. At the time of the Commander Crabb operation I myself felt that the value of the intelligence to be expected from it was disproportionately small in comparison with the political risks involved. I agree with Sir Edward Bridges in thinking that what is required now is "a better procedure for establishing intelligence priorities as a whole so as to ensure that only those intelligence gathering operations are submitted to us for approval in which the requirement inspiring the operation is sufficiently important, as judged by the overall requirements and policy of H.M.G., to justify the political risks involved."

6. If you also agree that there is a problem here the question of how best to achieve our object while at the same time causing as little disturbance as possible to our present joint system should, I think, be given to someone with a close knowledge of our intelligence organisation and of the various aspects of the requirements problem.

/7.

E.R.

7. Sir Edward Bridges suggests that the proper person to carry out the examination of this problem is Mr. Dean, the Chairman of the J.I.C. With your agreement, therefore, I propose that he should be instructed to do this under the terms of reference sidelined at "X" in paragraph 5, with instructions to report to all three Ministers concerned, i.e., myself, yourself and Minister of Defence.

8. I should be glad to know whether you agree with this proposal. If so, when Mr. Dean is given his instructions, you (or the Minister of Defence) would no doubt inform those authorities, such as the Chiefs of Staff and Heads of the civil Departments mainly involved, with whom it will be necessary for him to have consultation.

November, 1956



EEB.

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

October 24, 1956.

Dear Derek,

Thank you for your reply of October 20.

I think it will be quite satisfactory if the report to which you refer is ready in the time you mention, and there is certainly no special urgency to hurry it forward before then.

Yours,
Frederic Butler

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury.

BU 30/10

Ann Mills

20th October, 1956

Dear Freddy,

Thank you for your letter of 18th October about the Top Secret report which Bridges is doing. He has asked me to let you know that he will finish it in a week or ten days, but if it is really pressing he will advance it in the queue. Perhaps you would let me know if there is any special urgency.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) DEREK MITCHELL

F.A. Bishop, Esq.,
10, Downing Street, S.W.1.

E.R.

D.J.M.

I have 'X'.

2. I was thinking of polishing this off within the next ten days.

3. You can tell Freddy that it will be done in a week or ten days, but that if it is really pressing to do it earlier I will put aside other tasks which I thought were more urgent and do this, so to speak, out of turn.

E.E.B.

18th October, 1956



Mrn Mills

*I think you have X, but
no matter if you haven't. Would EEO
suggest what I should say on Y.
(Perhaps he would like to have a word
with Fred B. on the phone?)*

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

October 18, 1956.

*DJM
19/10*

Dear Derek,

X

In your letter of October 1 you told me that Bridges intended after October 15 to finish his report which he undertook to carry out in his reply to my top secret letter of June 29. Will you be working for him on this matter, and have you any idea what date he is likely to be working to?

Y

*Yours,
Freddie Burch.*

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury.

CABINET OFFICE,
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
S.W.1.

10th October, 1956.

WHITEHALL 5422

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

Dear Edward,

I should be glad to have a word with you about the enclosed when we meet to-morrow. Meanwhile you may find it helpful to have a brief note of my main comments.

First, I think that the Prime Minister may find it strange if you do not report your conclusions on the two specific issues which were referred to you. As I understand it the Joint Intelligence Committee have worked out a procedure for avoiding ~~the~~ confusion about Ministerial responsibility and for ensuring that Ministerial rulings are observed. If this is so, I would have thought it wise for you to deal with these issues (presumably by attaching a copy of the Joint Intelligence Committee paper and seeking the Prime Minister's approval of it) before going on to raise the "more fundamental" question discussed in the remainder of your minute.

Secondly, it seems to me that the draft submission prepared by Dean is disproportionately long. I would have thought that the essence of the recommendation appears sufficiently from the draft

minute/

The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges,
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.

minute annexed to it. Will it not be enough to send him this, with a much shorter covering note indicating that, for convenience, your recommendations have been cast in the form of a minute to the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence.

Thirdly, on the specific point which you put to me, I think it might be wise to tell Richard Powell what you propose to recommend - both on procedure and on the "more fundamental" question. But I think I would tell him, rather than consult him.

Yours ever,

Norman

TOP SECRET



Treasury Chambers,
Great George Street,
London, S.W.1

4th October, 1956

Dear Norman

Would you be good enough to look at the attached drafts by Pat Dean. I agree with his general conclusions which carry out the line which emerged from my talks with "C" and with "C" and Pat Dean, recorded in the file below.

But I am not quite sure whether I should send the attached minute to the P.M. or whether it would be better to put a little salt on Richard Powell's tail first.

Could we have a word about this?

Yours
Edward Bridges

The Rt. Hon. Sir Norman Brook,
G.C.B.

1st October, 1956

In your letter of 29th September you asked how the enquiry is going which Bridges undertook to make in his reply to your top secret letter of 29th June.

He has already done a good deal of work on this, and his intention is, I believe, to finish it off after 15th October, which is the date on which he will be handing over to Brook and Makins.

(Sgd) D. J. MITCHELL

F.A.Bishop, Esq.,
No. 10 Downing Street.



10 Downing Street
Whitehall

September 29, 1956.

Dear Derek,

I wonder whether you could sometime
let me know how the enquiry is going which
Bridges undertook to make in his reply to
my top secret letter of June 29?

*Yours
Frederick Brind*

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
H.M. Treasury.



Secretary of the Cabinet

One copy of Sir Edward Bridges' Report and one copy of the Summary of Evidence have been destroyed.


24 September, 1958.

JICX 183

TOP SECRET

FOREIGN OFFICE,
S.W.1.

September 26, 1956.

Dear Bridges,

As agreed at the meeting in your room on September 19, I now enclose a draft minute from yourself to the Prime Minister covering a further draft from the Prime Minister to the Minister of Defence and the Foreign Secretary. "C" and I have worked on these drafts together and are agreed upon them.

May I say also that both "C" and I have reflected a good deal on the problem and we are sure that some adjustment of our present practice is required if we are to get matters right in future. It is, however, a very difficult problem to resolve if we are not to upset the Service Departments and the Chiefs of Staff too badly, thereby tempting them to go back on the policy of close co-operation with other intelligence agencies which they have been following recently.

I have discussed the problem with Kirkpatrick who has seen the draft minutes and agrees.

Yours Sincerely

P. Dean

(P. Dean)

Rt. Hon. Sir E. Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
TREASURY,
Gt. George Street,
S.W.1.

TOP SECRET

XXXXX
 XXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXX
 XXXXX

MINUTE
 FROM SIR E.
 BRIDGES TO THE
 PRIME MINISTER

At a Ministerial meeting on June 26 to consider what action should be taken on my report on the case of Commander Crabb it was agreed that I should examine and report to you on two general matters arising from that incident:-

- (1) The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
- (2) Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister (or some other Minister) in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

As a result of the examinations which I have so far made, I am satisfied that by using the Joint Intelligence Committee a procedure can be devised for the purpose of securing proper co-ordination in the obtaining of political clearances for intelligence gathering operations whether they be on behalf of civilian or military departments. This should ensure that in future there will be no repetition of the disasters which followed the failure to pool all relevant knowledge in the case of Commander Crabb.

My examination of the problem, however, leads me to think that there is another and more fundamental question which is the real cause why Ministers at present feel a lack of confidence in the preparation and execution of many intelligence gathering operations,

/which

which are submitted to them for their approval.
The problem is as follows.

Under our present joint system the Joint Intelligence Committee is by its Charter responsible under the Chiefs of Staff for (inter alia) giving higher direction and keeping under review intelligence operations and defence security matters; for assembling, appreciating and presenting intelligence as required by the Chiefs of Staff and for initiating such other reports as may be required or it may deem necessary; and for keeping under review the organisation and working of intelligence and defence security as a whole at home and overseas so as to ensure efficiency, economy and a rapid adaptation to changing requirements, and to advise what changes are deemed necessary.

Although the Joint Intelligence Committee on occasions prepares papers at the request of the Foreign Office and other Departments its prime responsibility is to the Chiefs of Staff. This means that in the task of assessing intelligence requirements, including "cold war" requirements, the Chiefs of Staff's requirements necessarily dominate the decisions taken. This is so even though the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee is a Foreign Office official and the majority of its members come from non-Service Departments.

/In

In war or in a period when the threat of global war is great, the requirements of the Service Departments for intelligence must have a very high priority. At such times also authority will be more readily given for the execution of intelligence gathering operations, with possibly serious political implications if they go wrong, than in times like the present when the threat of global war is reduced.

I am informed that the Joint Intelligence Committee has for the last year or more been trying to reach a more satisfactory balance between the requirements for the military type of intelligence required by the Service Departments and the other forms of political and economic intelligence which are required by the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and other civilian Departments for the present conditions of "cold war" and competitive co-existence. On the one hand it is recognised that there will for long be a great requirement for those types of military intelligence which are the best available guide to the intentions and capabilities of the Sino-Soviet bloc to wage a global war. Without this type of information our planning and policy might involve us in great danger. On the other hand it is agreed that more effort needs to be put - than was the case say some three or four years ago - into obtaining and processing the intelligence necessary to deal with the various forms of Communist and nationalist political and economic penetration and subversion with which we are now faced in various parts of the world.

Limited War,

/It

It is however very difficult for the Joint Intelligence Committee to reconcile these conflicting requirements except in the broadest outline. The Chairman has no power to impose decisions and the Chiefs of Staff, to whom the Joint Intelligence Committee are responsible, are bound in the absence of an over-riding directive to maintain their own Service requirements and to oppose any substantial switch of effort from military to non-military targets.

I conclude from this that if ^{Ministry} we are to obtain a proper assessment of and balance between competing requirements for intelligence, there should be some re-adjustment of the present arrangement for assessing intelligence requirements both military and civilian. This must ensure that the requirements put forward in the first place to the collecting agencies and the consequent plans for collecting intelligence submitted by them for Ministerial approval are properly in accord with governmental policy at the material time. Authority would then be sought for the execution of those intelligence gathering operations in which the requirement inspiring the operation is sufficiently important, as judged by the overall requirements and policy of Her Majesty's Government, to justify the political risks involved.

It is also important that any re-adjustment of the present system should cause the minimum disturbance to our present joint system which has achieved a considerable amount of cohesion and flexibility in recent years.

/If

If you agree that there would be value in such a rearrangement, I think that the task of recommending how best to achieve it should in the first place be given to someone with a close knowledge of our intelligence organisation and of the various aspects of the requirements' problem.

I therefore recommend that you should invite the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence to agree that the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee should be given authority by you to examine the present system of assessing priorities for all intelligence requirements, both military and civilian, and to make recommendations how the present system should be adapted so as to ensure that a proper balance is maintained in assessing these requirements and that intelligence gathering operations based on these requirements and involving substantial political risks are submitted for authority only in accordance with the overall intelligence requirements and policy of Her Majesty's Government.

I attach a draft minute from you to the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of Defence accordingly.

TOP SECRET

minute
 from:
 Prime Minister
 to:
 Foreign Secretary
 and
 Minister of
 Defence

You will remember that Sir E. Bridges was requested at a Ministerial meeting on June 26 to examine and report further to me ^{on} ~~and~~ two general matters arising from the incident of Commander Crabb.

2. Sir E. Bridges has now informed me that he is satisfied that ~~by using the~~ ^{now devised} ~~J.I.C. procedure can be devised for the~~ ^{what will} ~~purpose of securing~~ proper coordination in ~~the~~ obtaining ~~of~~ political clearances for intelligence gathering operations, whether on behalf of civilian or military departments. This should ensure that in future there will be no repetition of the disasters which occurred in the case of Commander Crabb.

3. Sir E. Bridges has also told me that he thinks there is another and more fundamental question which is the real cause why Ministers at present feel a lack of confidence in the preparation and execution of many intelligence gathering operations which are submitted to them for their approval.

4. ~~The problem shortly is as follows.~~

Under our present joint system the J.I.C. is responsible to the Chiefs of Staff for giving higher direction, reviewing and generally organising our intelligence system. Under this system however the Joint Intelligence Committee has been finding it exceedingly difficult to reach a satisfactory balance between the requirements for the

/military

military type of intelligence required by the Service Departments and the other forms of political and economic intelligence which are required by the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and other civilian departments for the present conditions of limited war, "cold war" and competitive co-existence. It is recognised that there is a need for both types of intelligence but the problem is how to reconcile the requirements of both sides so as to ensure that the requirements put forward in the first place to the collecting agencies and the consequent plans for collecting intelligence submitted by them for Ministerial approval are properly in accord with governmental policy at the material time.

5. At the time of the Commander Crabb operation I myself felt that the value of the intelligence to be expected from it was disproportionately small in comparison with the political risks involved. I agree with Sir E. Bridges in thinking that what is required now is a better procedure for establishing intelligence priorities as a whole so as to ensure that only those intelligence gathering operations are submitted to us for approval in which the requirement inspiring the operation is sufficiently important, as judged by the overall requirements and policy of H.M.G.,

/to justify

to justify the political risks involved. ^U

If you also agree that there is a problem here the question of how best to achieve our object while at the same time causing ~~as little~~ ^{as possible} ~~immediate~~ disturbance to our present joint system should, I think, be given to someone with a close knowledge of our intelligence organisation and of the various aspects of the requirements problem.

7. Sir E. Bridges ^{agrees} advises me that the proper person to carry out the examination of this problem is the Chairman of the J.I.C. With your agreement therefore I propose that he should be instructed to do this under the following terms of reference.

"To examine and report upon the problem of establishing and maintaining an order of priorities among requirements for intelligence of all types - military, political, economic and technical - so as to bring the total requirement placed upon the Secret Intelligence Services into conformity with the needs arising from H.M.G.'s current policies."

"At the same time that you instruct Mr. Deen in the above sense you will doubtless inform those authorities, such as the Chiefs of Staff and Heads of the civil Departments mainly involved, with whom it will be necessary for him to have consultation."

8. I should be glad to know as soon as possible whether you agree with this propos-

He lived at
X 2 par mms

with him this
report to you
by 11.15
at
the Ministry
ce PM
F/S. 2 MWD

5

to Lady Ann Jones,
at a Lady's mother

E.R.

TOP SECRET

NOTE FOR RECORD

I had a talk this morning with Mr. Pat Dean and Sir Dick White. The talk followed the general lines set out in my note of 3rd September, in particular the paragraph at the bottom of page 1 and the top of page 2.

This line met with complete agreement both from Mr. Pat Dean and Sir Dick White.

Matters were left that they would go away and draft a submission for me to send to the P.M. on ~~the~~ lines which we discussed and agreed.

What follows is a record of points made in the discussion:

1. The J.I.C. suffered through its responsibility to the Chiefs of Staff who are disqualified from doing the job in the round.
2. Lots of operations to give information on relatively small points were put up by the country sections in the Service Departments. The man above spoke to his brief and tried to get for his own people what they asked. And so it went ^{on} up the chain of command.
3. At the moment, while Dean did some quizzing on the J.I.C. and was in his turn quizzed by Kirkpatrick, there was no real way of looking on the intelligence problems from a broad policy point of view.
4. There was a yearly exercise considering the state of our Intelligence and methods to improve it. But while the heads of Intelligence branches agreed in general terms with what was needed, when it came down to discuss particular items they always fought for the particular demands of their own branches and the exercise was useless.

/Of course

E.R.

5. Of course, the Service Departments had to get the best intelligence they could to show whether the Soviet Union was really planning war against us or was not. They must have information of the best indicators of this all important issue. But they should stick to these good indicators and not worry about the tactical disposition of forces in, say, East Germany.
6. The only way to set matters right was for the P.M. to ask for a report on the broad policy issues. A report will, in fact, have to be done by Dean and Dick White and the other people on the J.I.C. But they will do it under a different authority.

EC

19th September, 1956

E.R.

B.F. 17th Sept.

TOP SECRET

NOTE FOR RECORD

'C' came to see me today about this business.

I told him that I was rather disappointed with the paper enclosed with Mr. Dean's letter of 23rd August. This paper seemed to me to be limited to a specific aspect of procedure, namely, how to ensure that different types of operations were submitted to ministerial authority in the right way to ensure that the proper people were consulted. This was no doubt necessary, but it did not seem to me to do what was really needed. What I thought Ministers required was some reassurance that there was some proper organisation which thought about the kind of operations which were worth while: that in the light of *the* policy considerations which resulted from such discussion, *the value of* particular operations can be properly *assessed*.

'C' agreed with this, but he doubted whether we should ever get this out of the J.I.C. After all, the J.I.C. was under the Chiefs of Staffs and it was not truly representative of H.M.G. as a whole but primarily looked at intelligence from a defence point of view.

'C' told me that the Chiefs of Staff were rather peeved because they did not know ^{*much*} about the sort of operation which 'C' was carrying out in the Middle East.

He also thought that the F.O. regarded the J.I.C. rather with a tongue firmly planted in the cheek. There was a certain tension between the Defence Departments and the Foreign Office in these matters. If the Foreign Office did not provide the Chairman of the J.I.C. the result would be that the Service Departments would be fighting the Foreign Office. They thought it better that they should be at least at arms' length ^{*with*} the Service Departments on the J.I.C. I said that what I thought was needed was a body which ~~was~~ in no sense owed special allegiance to the Chiefs of Staffs. The Foreign Office should ^{*have*} ~~be~~ the Chairman, and 'C' and the head of M.I.5. should be members of it. There would also have to be representation of the Service Departments, and this made the body look awfully like

/the

E.R.

the J.I.C. I did not see how to make it look different, but one course might be to make the body report through the Secretary of the Cabinet to the Ministers concerned, and to give it terms of reference which made it clear that it was advising specifically on the policy which should govern secret intelligence operations.

I found that this was very much on the lines which commended themselves to 'C'.

'C' then raised with me the question of whether there was any use in trying now to get back to the principle that secret intelligence operations were matters of which the details should be known to senior officials and not to Ministers.

I said that I thought that 'C' was absolutely right on this. But given the attitude of the present P.M. to these matters, it seemed to me that it was quite hopeless to try to tackle this issue directly. If we were to do so we should only get a permanent ruling which embodied a practice which we believed to be wrong.

EDB

3rd September, 1956

ATP

1 shd see Pat Dean

2 C together

as Pat Dean

as sm
is back from leave

leave

17th Sept.

Monday 3.
BJM Park L km
2 C me
 FOREIGN OFFICE,
 S.W.1. *DP*

JICX 183

TOP SECRET AND PERSONAL

August 23, 1956.

Dear Bridges,

You wrote to me on July 12 about the enquiry which the Prime Minister has asked you to undertake as a result of the frogman incident into the procedure for co-ordinating and obtaining clearance for certain intelligence gathering operations.

With your permission a limited number of members of the J.I.C. have been considering this question and I now enclose a copy of a paper which they have drawn up on this subject.

It was agreed at the J.I.C. that I would show you this paper to see what you thought of it and that thereafter, if you thought fit, the J.I.C. would be glad to have a talk with you or prepare any further information which you required.

The paper has been prepared entirely informally and if you do not like it, it can be rejected.

Since the paper was drafted it has become apparent that Ministerial approval for at least certain types of intelligence gathering operations is likely to be very difficult to obtain. If these difficulties are likely to continue for any considerable period of time the procedure set out in the paper, which has been designed to ensure as far as possible that no potentially dangerous operation can be carried out without Ministerial approval being sought, will to a large extent become otiose. It will also be difficult for the departments and agencies whose duty it is to collect intelligence to produce the necessary results.

I should have much liked to have had an opportunity to discuss all this with you personally because, as Chairman of the J.I.C., I am disturbed about the possible effects on the whole of our intelligence organisation. Unfortunately I am going on leave for three weeks and I expect that you will wish to proceed with this matter as soon as possible. I wonder therefore whether you would be willing in my absence to talk to "C" himself who is perhaps more concerned than any other Director of Intelligence in these problems. We have talked over the present difficulty between ourselves and we would be grateful if you could spare a little time to discuss with him not only the draft paper but also these further difficulties which we both foresee.

"C" himself has now returned from leave and would be willing to come to speak to you at any time which would be convenient.

Yours Sincerely
Patrick Dean.

(P. Dean)

Rt. Hon. Sir E. Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.,
 TREASURY.

TOP SECRET*For RACHINADANAN**F U*P.U.S. DEPARTMENT
NOT TO BE ENTERED

J.I.C./2030/56

COPY NO. 15

MR. P.H. DEAN
 REAR ADMIRAL J.G.T. INGLIS
 MAJOR GENERAL C.R. PRICE
 AIR VICE MARSHAL W.M.L. MacDONALD
 SIR DICK WHITE
 MR. R.H. HOLLIS
 MR. E.M. JONES

PERSONAL

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING CLEARANCE
FOR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING OPERATIONS
 (Previous reference: J.I.C./1952/56
 dated 3rd August, 1956)

You considered the draft procedure contained in Annex to my minute under reference after the weekly meeting of the Directors of Intelligence on 9th August, 1956. You instructed me to produce a revised draft incorporating the points made in discussion.

2. This has been done and the revised draft, which is attached at Annex, has been approved by the Chairman.

3. The future procedure to be adopted is as follows:-

- (a) The Chairman agreed to show the draft to Sir E. Bridges and seek his approval of it. If approved, the procedure will presumably be incorporated into Sir E. Bridges' reply to the Prime Minister's request.
- (b) The Chairman undertook to inform you when Sir E. Bridges had signified his approval, so that you could then obtain your Secretary of State's informal agreement to the procedure proposed.
- (c) Your Secretary of State's informal agreement to be notified to the Chairman in due course.

(Signed) J. G. ATKINSON

14th August, 1956

/ Annex I to J.I.C./1793/56 dated 16th July, 1956

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETA N N E XPROCEDURE FOR CO-ORDINATION AND OBTAINING
CLEARANCE FOR SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS

The Prime Minister has asked Sir E. Bridges to examine and report to him on two general matters concerning special intelligence operations which are likely to cause embarrassment to Her Majesty's Government if they miscarry:--

- (a) The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
- (b) Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister (or some other Minister) in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

2. There are various types of operations falling within the category referred to by the Prime Minister. These operations are for the purpose of gathering information and not for subversion. They vary according to the number of departments interested in the operation, and may be any one of the following types which are examined separately below:--

- (a) operations affecting one or more departments.
- (b) operations affecting one or more departments and a collecting agency.
- (c) operations affecting the Security Service.
- (d) operations on special occasions.

3. Operations affecting one or more departments but not involving any collecting agency

These operations fall into two categories:--

- (a) Those operations mounted by a department to satisfy its own needs. The procedure in this case will be that the department concerned will send details of the operation to the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, and will put up the case to their own Secretary of State, who in due course minutes the Prime Minister, with a copy to the Foreign Secretary.

[NOTE: Clearance of a specific operation of a series for which "blanket" approval has been given is sometimes given by or on behalf of the Foreign Secretary. In other cases he may consider that the operation should also be approved by the Prime Minister.]

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

- (b) Those operations which arise from a requisition by one department which another department will have to carry out (e.g. War Office request for Photographic Reconnaissance by the Air Ministry). The procedure will be:-

(i) The two Departments concerned will work out the details together and concert their plan with the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office. The requisitioning department will provide an unequivocal statement establishing the need for the requirement and reasons for selecting the method proposed for obtaining it.

at ministerial or highest official level

(ii) The Secretary of State of the collecting Department will minute the Prime Minister seeking his approval, sending copies of his minute to the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State of the requisitioning department. Exceptionally a copy will be sent to the Minister of Defence. At the same time, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, will be warned that the request is being made.

In this case the burden of responsibility lies with the collecting department, whose Minister will have to answer in Parliament if the operation miscarries. It is important that all the actions in sub-paragraph (ii) above are taken in parallel.

[NOTE: For specific operations at short notice affecting two departments for which "blanket" approval has been given, the requisitioning department will initiate the operation, informing the Prime Minister's Office, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, and the collecting department (if other than the requisitioning department). The operation will be carried out unless one of the above-mentioned authorities forbid it.]

4. Operations affecting one or more departments and/or a collecting agency

at ministerial or highest official level

These operations may arise from an agency itself or from a request by one or more departments to M.I.6 or G.C.H.Q. for intelligence. The requisitioning department will state the requirement to the collecting agency. In overseas operations, M.I.6 or G.C.H.Q., after consultation with any other departments concerned, will submit a plan to the Foreign Office for approval. Where such operations are to take place in the United Kingdom, M.I.6 or G.C.H.Q. will also consult the Security Service, who will be responsible for deciding whether Home Office clearance is necessary. Where a requisitioning department's requirement can only be met by a collecting agency by an operation incurring considerable risk, the department must confirm that in their view the requirement should still stand despite the risk.

at ministerial or highest official level

- 2 -

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET5. Operations affecting the Security Service

The Security Service is also a collecting agency for intelligence required by other departments, but its position is a special one. It is not normally requested by any department to procure specified items of intelligence. It may respond to requests from a department (which is itself often another collecting department) for intensified effort in certain fields. The Security Service has procedures for clearance which are established by long usage. These usually involve Home Office clearance, but there are exceptions which also or solely concern the Foreign Office (e.g. operations against foreign diplomats in the U.K.) or Colonial governments (e.g. certain operations in colonial territory). Action may fall to the Security Service in the course of operations on special occasions. In these circumstances the Security Service becomes a full party to the provisions of paragraph 6 below.

6. Operations on Special Occasions

The main principle to be observed in the case of operations on special occasions (such as the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit, Air Delegation visit to Moscow, Geneva Conference, or visits of Scientific Delegations) is that early discussion is necessary to co-ordinate action and prevent overlapping before plans reach different stages of preparation, and to determine priorities.

While it is not necessary to have a formal procedure for dealing with such occasions, the opportunity offered by such occasions for collecting intelligence is a matter of concern to the Joint Intelligence Committee.

The procedure will be that any Director of Intelligence on learning of any such impending events, will inform the Chairman, who will arrange for a discussion, in Committee, to co-ordinate action to exploit the intelligence potential of the occasion to the maximum.

7. Responsibility for informing Departments of a Minister's decision

- (a) When the Foreign Secretary, or the Permanent Under-Secretary, Foreign Office, on behalf of the Foreign Secretary, approve a special intelligence operation, the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department, Foreign Office, will be responsible for informing the departments and agencies concerned of the decision.
- (b) In cases in which the final decision is taken by the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Private Office will be responsible for ensuring that the Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee and the private offices of the departments directly concerned with the special intelligence operation are informed simultaneously of the Prime Minister's decision. The Chairman, J.I.C. will be responsible for ensuring that departments and collecting agencies indirectly concerned are informed of the Prime Minister's decision.

TOP SECRET

12th July, 1956

Dear Dean,

You were good enough to come and see me yesterday about the matter mentioned in Bishop's letter to me of 29th June (of Foreign Secretary which the/ had a copy), namely, the general matters which I am asked to enquire into following on the Frogman incident.

I send this note to say that I would be glad if you would be good enough to initiate discussion of these matters with the J.I.C. The members of the J.I.C. are clearly concerned in these questions and we are agreed in thinking that it is probably desirable that the J.I.C. should come rather more into the picture on these questions than hitherto.

/Perhaps

P.H. Dean, Esq., C.M.G.

Perhaps when the J.I.C. have had an opportunity to
formulate some ideas on the subject you would be good
enough to let me know the kind of suggestions which they
have in mind.

I think we agreed that on the whole it would be
in
desirable that the early stages discussion of these
matters should be kept on a rather informal basis.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) EDWARD BRIDGES



Put with pps

*With
the Compliments of the
Private Secretary*

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, S.W.1

E.R.

TOP SECRET

NOTE FOR RECORD

Mr. Pat Dean came to see me this morning about the enquiry remitted to me by the Prime Minister following my report on the Frogman incident.

Mr. Dean said that this incident had been a great shock to the whole Intelligence world and to the Services and, particularly to the Admiralty.

There was also the considerable fear that as a result of what had happened in the Frogman case no Department would ever be allowed to carry out any kind of activity without permission of Ministers and that usually this would not be given.

Mr. Dean gave particulars of the sort of operations which were in contemplation or being done. These included:

1. Radar operations like Operation CLARET
2. Ferret flights
3. A submarine lying on the bottom in a certain area
4. Work done by Service Attachés, e.g., in taking photographs

In view of the present attitude towards B. and K. it was difficult to get Ministers to approve any of these things. But he thought that it would be useful if he were to hold a meeting with the three Service Directors of Intelligence, the Head of G.C.H.Q., the Head of M.I.6, and perhaps also the Head of M.I.5 to try and clarify the situation and to forward certain proposals.

I agreed with this. In general discussion we also agreed that it was essential that there should be much more cohesion between the Service Departments and the Secret Services about operations of this kind. The operation should be worked out in greater harmony. There should also be much more in the way of a central pool for knowledge of what

/operations

E.R.



operations had or had not been approved. I also made the point that there should be a single central channel for getting approval of such operations.

5 It was also agreed that much greater precautions should be taken with operations at home than in regard to operations abroad and that M.I.6 should be brought in as regards operations at home.

Mr. Dean also mentioned that the Admiralty had a rather ridiculous idea that only operations carried out by M.I.6 were covert operations whereas in fact the Admiralty themselves carried out many covert operations.

Mr. Dean also said that he thought it would be useful to get the Chiefs of Staff to express a definite opinion of the value which they attached to intelligence operations against Russia in present circumstances.

I said that it seemed to me that the lines on which Mr. Dean was proposing to act were exactly right. I would be glad if he would do as proposed. Did he want a formal letter from me or not?

We agreed that I should send him a note saying that we had discussed the matter and that I would be glad if he would start things off by having a discussion with the J.I.C. on the lines which he had mentioned to me. When he had got some way I would suggest that he came and report to me either by himself or, preferably, with some members of the J.I.C. in order that we could see where we were getting to.

I said that I thought that the real help which I could give him in this matter would be to lend support to a move which would give the J.I.C. greater authority in handling these matters in future.

11th July, 1956

E.R.E.E.B.

Mr. Pat Dean is coming to see you at 11 tomorrow, Wednesday. This is at his suggestion: he wants to give you one or two thoughts in connection with your new enquiry on responsibility for covert operations.

You have not yet seen the letter of 6th July below this note from Brigadier Spence at the War Office nominating General Oliver as the War Office contact for the new enquiry.

*D.J.M.*10th July, 1956

From : Brigadier R.H.G.O. Spence, C.B.E.,



TOP SECRET

WAR OFFICE,
WHITEHALL,
LONDON, S.W.1.

6th July, 1956.

Telephone : WHITEHALL 9400. Ext. 803.

Reference : 129/A.H./5637 (A.C.S.)

Dear *Mitchell,*

Arising from the frogman incident, the Prime Minister has asked Sir Edward Bridges to carry out an examination of two subjects. The Minister of Defence is concerned to see that the War Office provides the necessary facilities to enable Sir Edward Bridges to carry out his examination.

This is to let you know that the Vice Chief of the Imperial General Staff (Lieut.-General W.P. Oliver, K.C.B. - who incidentally is receiving the accolade on, Tuesday next, 10th July) will ensure that every possible War Office assistance is given to Sir Edward. No doubt you will channel any requests direct to General Oliver.

His address and telephone number are :-

Room 208,
War Office,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

Telephone No: WHItEhall 9400, Ext. 149 (S).

I am sending a copy of this letter to Forward at the Ministry of Defence.

Yours

sincerely
R.H.G.O. Spence

D.J. Mitchell, Esq.,
Treasury,
S.W.1.

TOP SECRET

Copy to: Secretary

2nd July, 1956

Arising from the frogman incident the Prime Minister has asked Sir Edward Bridges to examine and report to him on:-

1. The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
2. Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister or some other Minister in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

As you were not concerned with the Ministerial discussions on the incident I have been asked to let you know this and to ask you to see that your Department provides the necessary facilities to enable Sir Edward Bridges to carry out his examination.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Secretary of State for Air.

WALTER MONCKTON

The Rt. Hon. Antony Head, C.B.E., M.C., M.P.

TOP SECRET

Bu 16/7/56
TOP SECRET

2nd July, 1956

Dear Bishop,

Thank you for your note of 29th June about the two general matters which I was asked to enquire into arising from the Crabb incident.

I shall, of course, be very happy to carry out this enquiry, although it will hardly be possible to do it before the recess, given the pressure of work at the present time.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD BRIDGES

F.A.Bishop, Esq.,
No.10 Downing Street.



10 Downing Street
Whitehall

June 29, 1956.

TOP SECRET

Dear Bridges,

At the meeting on June 26 to consider what action should be taken on your report on Commander Crabb, it was agreed that you would examine and report to the Prime Minister on two general matters arising from the Crabb incident:

1. The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
2. Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister or some other Minister in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

You will need to consult Departments and in order that the necessary instructions may be given I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary, the Minister of Defence, the First Lord and the Home Secretary. I suggest that the Minister of Defence should explain to the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Air, who have not so far been involved, that the recent incident has led to the Prime Minister deciding that you should examine the general matters mentioned above, and that the necessary facilities for such an examination should be provided by their Departments.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to Hunt at the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely,
J.A. Bismar

The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Bridges, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., M.C.

TOP SECRET

28th June, 1956

Bridges has had a copy of the note which Brook made of the meeting in the Prime Minister's room on 26th June to consider what action should be taken on the report of the enquiry on Commander Crabb.

In a covering note Brook said that he assumed that Bridges would proceed with the action noted in the final paragraph of the record of the meeting without any further instructions from the Prime Minister.¹ There are, however, one or two loose ends - notably the fact that the War Office and the Air Ministry were not involved in the Crabb incident and therefore do not (or should not) know what has been going on.

/ In

F.A. Bishop, Esq.

TOP SECRET

In order to tidy this up Bridges suggests that you may

care to write to him on the lines of the enclosed draft letter.

You may, of course, prefer to send copies of the letter to

the Air Ministry and the War Office with a covering letter

explaining the background, but there is something to be

said for letting the Ministry of Defence do this little piece

of co-ordination.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd) D.J. MITCHELL

TOP SECRET

DRAFT letter to Sir Edward Bridges

At the meeting on 26th June to consider what action should be taken on your report on Commander Crabb, it was agreed that you would examine and report to the Prime Minister on two general matters arising from the Crabb incident:

1. The question of Ministerial responsibility for certain types of covert operations.
2. Arrangements to make sure that decisions given by the Prime Minister or some other Minister in regard to an operation put forward by one Department are automatically brought to the notice of other Departments concerned.

You will need to consult Departments and in order that the necessary instructions may be given I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the Foreign Secretary, the Minister of Defence, the First Lord and the Home Secretary. I suggest that the Minister of Defence should explain the situation to the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Air who have not so far been involved.

I am also sending a copy to Hunt at the Cabinet Office.

28th June, 1956

